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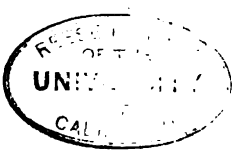
TRAVELS

IN

North and Central China

BY

JOHN GRANT BIRCH



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HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED
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This Book presents the narrative of Travel contained in Mr. Birch's Diary somewhat compressed and modified in form.

The Illustrations are from Photographs taken by Mr. Birch during the course of his Travels.

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TRAVELS IN NORTH AND CENTRAL CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

MALTA TO PEKING.

AFTER a six-days' voyage from Malta to Alexandria, and a week spent among friends in the Delta and at Cairo, where I received the freshest news concerning the rebuilding of Khartum and the Sirdar's plans for the Sudan, I hastened to Ismailia and secured a cabin on board the P. and O. steamer *Arcadia*, a beautiful and comfortable vessel. On the 18th of March, 1899, we steamed southwards, the season being that between the two monsoons, when both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean are usually at rest, and in the calmest of weather we passed the hours with the usual games and gossip, books and stories. At Aden between 60 and 70 passengers left us and, though we had still about 120 on board, the big ship seemed deserted. Among those who remained were four Russians on their way to China, who exemplified the common remark that Russians usually seem happier and more at ease

than other foreigners on an English ship. We had on board also a traveller who might have passed for the original of the famous Captain Kettle of the magazines. He had been in all parts of the world, and in all kinds of tight places; had served under Gordon in China; had been pulled up in the Malacca Straits by the *Alabama*, and had been wrecked on the Little Bass Rock on the Ceylon coast, when sailing in an old oak-built Indiaman, carrying material for an iron lighthouse to be erected on that very rock. This resourceful voyager told his yarns with inimitable gesture and by-play, and with many realistic touches, in a harsh, raucous voice which belied a kindly nature.

We reached Colombo at day-break on Easter morning, April 2, and there were transferred to the *Coromandel*, which, having come from Calcutta, was in quarantine on account of the plague. On board we had a couple who presented one of the saddest spectacles, a trim, pretty, fair-haired, peach-faced English girl, married to an unprepossessing half-caste Portuguese Indian. One could not but forebode a sad awakening and a tragic story. On April 5, we passed the island of Pulo Brass (commonly called Acheen Head) and the island of Pulo Way, where, with our glasses, we could make out the tops of the buildings of the new coaling station which was being built by a Dutch company with, I was told, Russian and French capital. For several days we had tropical rains, but when, on April 8, we reached Singapore the sun came out, spreading a glamour everywhere, and the air was laden with the scent of frangipanni blossoms or with the mal-odorous effluvia of China-town. At Hong Kong,

having a morning ashore, we enjoyed a visit to the botanical gardens, but, on resuming our voyage, sundry misadventures befell us. First a hawser fouled with the propeller, then a fresh monsoon upset the equanimity of some; several times we

A CHINESE BEGGAR.

narrowly escaped collision with erratic steamers, and one night a Sidi boy, killed by falling into the stokehold, was promptly and with little ceremony passed overboard by his companions.

On April 18 we disembarked at Wusung and, going to Shanghai, took passage on board the s.s. *Hsui-chi*, one of the China coast steamers, for

Taku. On the 21st we reached the Taku bar and, crossing it in a small tug towing lighters, arrived at the Tang-ku wharves at mid-day. On the bar we counted 15 or 16 vessels, shewing a considerable expansion of shipping during the past year. From Tang-ku to Tientsin we travelled by railway in a first-class car, which, owing to the filthy and pilfering habits of the Chinese, was of bare wood-work.

Having spent several days at Tientsin we proceeded to Peking, where, after visiting the cricket ground which, with a Moorish pavilion, had been presented to the community, and, after seeing the race-course, we explored the filthy Chinese city. Several notable improvements were conspicuous. On the Peking trams there was now a comfortable saloon-car reserved for Europeans. A large and improving terminal station, with fine spacious platforms, occupied the place of the mud-huts of but a year before; but still there was the hurly-burly of Chinese passengers, coolies, beggars, etc., and the confusion of carts and donkeys outside. We made the dusty journey into the town by carts, but a fine macadamised road and an electric tramway were nearly complete. Our road was a track where the wheels sank to the axles in mud, or were smothered in dust, while hordes of beggars infested the path, kowtowing in the dust. Inside the walls we were surprised to find a real macadamised road, stretching nearly across the Chinese city, then we had to struggle through the gate and along the inexpressibly vile streets of the Tartar city, with its moving block of carts, donkeys, wheelbarrows, ponies, mules, and camel-trains, and its swarming foot-traffic, all mingled together, there being no

footpaths and no rule of the road. The road itself is a rutted series of mounds and hollows, deep-coated with dust, mud, and all imaginable filth. Legation Street is but little better, though on it stand most of the Legation and other European buildings, among them the comparatively palatial and towering new erection of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank. We put up at the Club, where we

A CHINESE CROWD.

met old acquaintances. We dined with ——, and, in a long and interesting conversation learned something of the simmering pot of intrigue and aggression which was in progress. I called on the Inspector-General, who was as Chinese as ever, and had much to say against the iniquity of foreign aggressors, though not hopeful for the Chinese themselves.

One day we visited the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Mission, where I resumed my acquaintance

with the famous Père Favier, now Bishop. He is a delightful old gentleman, with a tall burly figure, but seemed hardly episcopal, as, clad *à la chinoise*, and smoking a long cheroot, he came forward to meet us. Under the guidance of his chaplain we went over the whole establishment. In this Mission are brought up a number of children of the poorer classes, boys whom the parents cannot afford to keep, and girls who would otherwise be cast out in infancy, alive, for pigs and dogs to devour. There were five reception rooms, one of which contained a multifarious collection of Chinese deities and mythological beings, many of them of great antiquity and rarity, while another was a library containing tomes brought to China by the earlier missions many centuries since, and others were class-rooms where the younger Chinese are educated and the older ones, if suitable, are prepared for the University. Pleasant gardens or open spaces, set with roses, fruit-trees, and vegetables, intersperse the buildings. Printing in Chinese type and bookbinding are carried on by pupils, who thus prepare copies of the Scriptures. The Cathedral was large and stately (as things go in North China), with mud brick walls, stone facings, Oregon pine columns, stained glass windows, and fine organ. In a corridor we met our fellow passenger from Shanghai, M. l'Abbé de G——, who, educated in a Jesuit college, had been twenty years in China, never to return to France. A worn, delicate, thoughtful, well-read man, we found him a charming companion, with all the true French courtesy. He had been present at the attack on the French mission in Szechwan, six months before, when one of the Fathers was carried off

captive to the mountains, ostensibly by a notorious bandit, in reality by order of the Viceroy of the Province. The Abbé had come to Peking to give evidence before the French Legation, not, as he said, that there might be striking off of heads, but that justice should be done and the lives and property of the foreigners and the catechumens respected.

He told us that there are two hundred French missionaries in Szechwan alone, and that they have a large number of converts. He gave me a warm invitation to the province, promising that he would have me passed on from one mission station to another, so that my travel should be pleasant and easy. I hear, however, that to the French mission in Szechwan is attributed an important political movement of a somewhat insidious character. Anyhow, my dear Abbé is too much of a gentleman and too amiable and charming to be otherwise than most likeable, and his friendship for England was very pronounced.

CHAPTER II.

PEKING TO KALGAN.

ON April 30th, S—— and I left Peking at 7.30 a.m. with two carts, each with two mules and a driver, three donkeys, two donkey drivers, and the "boy" Wong. Passing out through the north gate we came, after travelling two miles, to the remains of the wall of the *old* Tartar city which, according to Marco Polo, was in his time a very fine place called Cambaluc. The country was level and well-cultivated, but the roads were of the worst description. Europeans were not so much gazed at as when I was there twelve years before. At one o'clock we arrived at Sha-ho, an important place 53 li (18 miles) from Peking, standing between two fine stone bridges of the Ming period, now in complete disrepair. Travelling 45 li (15 miles) further we arrived at Nan-kau, at the mouth of the pass, through which runs the caravan road to Mongolia and Siberia. The last few miles were on a slightly rising grade and over a torrent bed, now quite dry. The mountains looked fine and apparently near, but in dry climates distance is deceptive, and the pass is, besides, deeply inset. Kaoliang (millet) and other crops were just appearing above ground. Cul-

tivation was very good, the ground being kept perfectly free from weeds. Numerous villages stood along the route, and the people were very civil and apparently well-to-do. The small yellow-grey gentian, and a small pale-blue iris with leaves like those of the narcissus were growing in very dry places. Elder grew as at home. We saw no ferns anywhere, nor any stones till we approached the pass. The soil, a friable yellow loam, with plenty of nourishment in it, was dry and dusty, with no signs of artificial irrigation. Near the mouth of the pass it became more clayey. There was a moderate quantity of timber, but nothing large, a species of willow predominating. We met a few Mongols, notably a party on camels, including women in bright-coloured dresses, who stared hard at us, as we at them. Very much sunburnt they were, dark bronze, darker than Chinese. The head-dress of the Chinese women changes at a short distance from Peking, the tail of hair projecting backwards instead of being worked transversely. The men are stripped to the waist, little boys naked; little girls in loose trousers with arms and sides bare. Elder girls appear to be more secluded, but are often to be seen clad generally in bright pink or green trousers.

Starting at six next morning, we arrived at the wall at 11 o'clock, and passed through Cha-tau at two p.m. The pass is fifteen miles long and the higher end is 2,100 feet over sea level, say 1,900 feet over Peking, an average rise of about one in forty in the fifteen miles in which it nearly all takes place. It is suitable for road construction for the first five miles, the grade being easy and the valley fairly open. The old road was the torrent-bed, but there is now a

made road higher up. At Ku-yung-kwan, five miles up, where is the wonderful Buddha gateway, or triumphal archway, the valley contracts, and still more so at Shih-fu-su, five miles further on, where the crags nearly meet. At Yu-lin the country resumes the same character of soil as on the Peking side of the pass, and the farms are large and well tilled. The country is watered by an insignificant stream running west, and a very small amount of irrigation is visible. Both in the pass and plain, pear, apricot, and peach trees were in bloom and walnuts were breaking into leaf. Violets, with a leaf different from ours, were plentiful. The country is level from Yu-lin to Huai-lai (31 li), which is a large walled town with curiously machicolated battlements. Some buzzards, a partridge, and a wagtail, represented all the animal life we saw, except at Ku-yang-kwan, where, high up on the hill-side just before and above the town, was a heronry in some conifers near a little temple. Some of the sitting birds allowed us to approach to within twenty-five yards. The Indian character of the fine bas-reliefs on the arch in this town is remarkable, likewise the inscriptions in six tongues—Sanskrit being one.

Next day at 6.45 a.m. we left Huai-lai and passing Sha-cheng (50 li) reached Ki-ming at 6 o'clock (40 li). The elevation above sea-level remaining practically the same, the country soon after one leaves Huai-lai becomes stony and less fertile, but improves after Tu-mu, and is again stonier towards Ki-ming. The route follows the northern side of the plain, in some places closely approaching outlying spurs of the barrier range. The watercourse

gradually leaves the northern side and follows the central plain, at a lower elevation. Opposite Tu-mu the river bends to south-west, and on the southern side of the plain joins the Hun-ho, which runs in a south-south-easterly direction, and leaves the plain to pass through a mountain range from which it emerges to the west of Peking. In a somewhat hazy light the central plain appeared to be the most fertile, but nearly all the ground we passed over was arable, and more or less important walled villages or small towns were met with every few miles. The route was traversed at fairly frequent intervals by "ramblas" or dry torrent-beds, which take off the storm water from the lofty barrier range. This chain of mountains, which runs in a west-south-west direction, is entirely bare of timber, and much denuded. The rock outcrops largely, the rest being covered with a sparse vegetation. On its northern bench the plain is besprinkled with small water-worn stones and gravel, as well as with mountain limestones and green whinstones, the débris consisting of several kinds of granite and other metamorphic rock. There is much variety geologically, with a great depth of alluvial soil over large areas, the same finely divided yellow sedimentary deposit which prevails between Nan-kau and Peking, and of the same friable character. The roads on this soil are characteristic, being sunk deeply, often 15 to 20 feet below the neighbouring surface; and where there are several paths in close proximity to one another, pillars of earth stand up vertically and separate them. In wet weather travelling must be very severe on carts and animals, and the torrent-beds, being entirely uncontrolled,

must present serious difficulties. The towns and villages are nearly all walled, and are in the form of oblongs or true squares, with high curtains, flanking bastions, barbicans, and handsome machicolated battlements. In some cases there are extensive double walls. About most towns a sort of external town, largely composed of inns, has grown up. The walls are more or less out of repair, breached or ruinous in places, and in any case incapable of resisting artillery. The people are a fine race of hardy, healthy, well-nourished men, and there are great numbers of plump children. The costume and racial characteristics are purely Chinese and closely resemble those of the people between Peking and Nan-kau. The dogs are large, and peaceable as a rule, of all colours, with drop ears, and bushy tails. Very few oxen are to be seen, and few sheep. The latter are both black and white, with short coats and fat, flat, fan-shaped tails. One cat only did we see after leaving Peking. Great numbers of donkeys and splendid mules are used. One of the mules we noticed was striped on legs and partly on flanks, like a wild ass. Horses are not nearly so numerous. All animals seemed well fed and cared for. Great numbers of camel caravans were seen passing on different routes. From about five or six in the morning, or even earlier, the animals rest with their packs off in yards—flat circular spaces near the towns—and at about two o'clock they resume their march and continue it through the night. Their stature is great, and their wool, which was now peeling off in lumps, is very plentiful. They carry a load of 400lbs. in two packages. One caravan of eighty-eight

animals which we saw was laden with dressed stones. Numbers of donkeys also passed, each laden with about 1½ to 2 cwt. of coal, or else with limestone, evidently for fluxing ironstone, or for making lime. There were many small forges in the towns.

We passed a place where wheat was growing on irrigated land. On a large swamp, or "gheel," we saw many black-headed, long-winged tern nesting, besides ducks. Other birds of the region were sparrows, magpies, many pigeons—largely blue rocks—a few herons and large, handsome black cranes with white breasts, yellow legs, and red beaks.

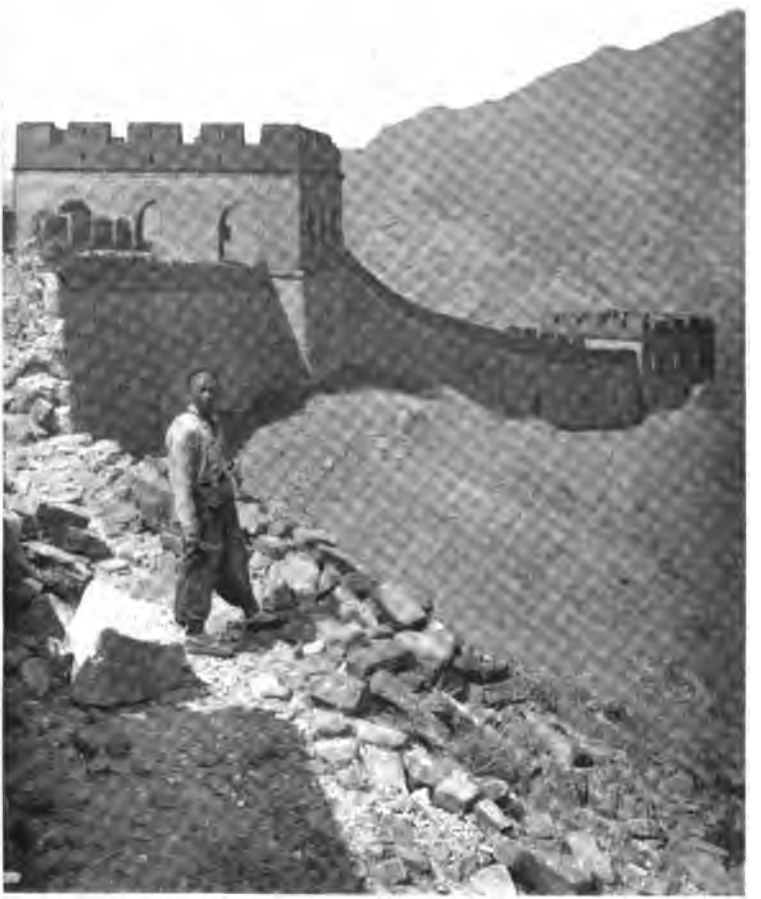
Setting out from Ki-ming on the morning of May 3, we could, with the aid of glasses, make out a few buildings, probably a monastery, on the top of a lofty mountain rock close by, round the base of which ran the swift and muddy waters of the Yang-ho or Hun-ho, which we were to follow up to Kalgan. Struggling against the wind and dust over an arid waste, and then by some irrigated land, we rounded the mountain which, like others near, was honeycombed with surface mines and adits, from which a poor coal is extracted. Our path then lay along the river, a broad expanse of sand and shallow water, quite uncontrolled except by the hill bases which approached closely on either side.

Beyond the first village our route lay over the dry sand beds of the flood level, until we reached Siang-shui-pio, where it passed directly above the river by a path cut in the stone cliffs, very steep, rough, and overhung. The scenery in this pass, with the rapid river and fine mountains, was grand, and

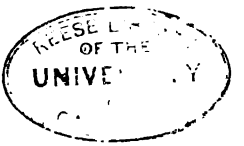
would have been beautiful had the water been clear and the hills wooded.

A long and dreary road of the worst character through the friable soil of North China—which occurs wherever there are no hills adjacent—led up to the gates of Hsuen-hwa. This city, standing at an elevation of 1,900 feet, is the second city of the province of Chih-li, possessing wide streets and a large population, which, like that of Peking, shows signs of decreasing. It is oblong in form, girt with a high thick wall, the curtain of which is only here and there flanked by bastions. After traversing the city, the road crosses the foot-hills of the spurs of the mountain range parallel with the river, for the most part a barren, sandy, stony country, descending at intervals into the loess formation, where the traffic cuts deep, wide, sandy trenches. The villages, small and poor, are composed of walled farms. Here cultivation had not yet begun, the valleys apparently waiting for rain. A narrow but not high pass, in which occurs the remains of a fine paved road of great antiquity, leads to a height overlooking a plain running at right angles to the course of the river, and, facing us at some miles' distance, was the long, jagged, opposing range, on the summit of which for scores of miles we could distinctly trace the towers surmounting the Wall of China, the real old Wall, of which that at Nan-kau is but the retrenchment. The view was superb, and the huge proportions of the Wall, as judged by this section of it, impressed us with the magnitude of its conception as a military work, though its futility is obvious.

The passage of the plain, which the farmers



GREAT WALL NEAR NAN-KAU PASS.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wi. iow busily ploughing, occupied us till almost dark. We saw no wild creatures except birds, and of these only a species of bunting, some hawks, buzzards, blue-winged water-wagtails, and one plover resembling the stone plover of India. The population was strictly Chinese in its character and habits, and the architecture also Chinese. All day the sight of the foreigner excited much curiosity and attention, and in the towns we were quickly mob-surrounded. It was 7.30 in the evening when we reached Yu-lin after a day's journey of 100 li (33 miles).

On May 4, after a three hours' march over the plain between the river and the mountain spurs, we reached Kalgan, which, at an elevation of 2,450 feet, stands at the point where the great Wall, running down the spurs of the range on the east, crosses the river to ascend immediately on the southern side. The town thus blocks the passes leading from Mongolia, and the great caravan route lies right across it, along populous and busy streets containing shops where German, Russian and English goods compete with the local products and those of Mongolia. There were throngs of Mongols and Lamas, easily distinguishable by their great broad faces, high cheek bones and the display of colour in their dress. Many of them wore sheepskin "poshteens" or plain leather garments dyed yellow or red, while the Chinese proper were all in their wadded clothes. After finding an inn with some difficulty, and washing the dust from mouth, eyes, ears, nose, hair and garments, we started with a guide and found nearly two miles off, in the pass leading to Siberia, the "hongs" of the Russian merchants

who attend to the transit trade in tea, and, no doubt, to imports also. A half-Mongol Russian, who spoke French and bad English, took us into his house and gave us a little information. Afterwards we explored the town under the guidance of a member of the American Mission, the only other Christian Mission here being Swedish. An interesting part of Kalgan was the Upper City, a small walled enclosure which women are not allowed to enter, abutting on the wall where it crosses the pass. It had a number of excellent Chinese shops, all with double storeys, unusual in China. Many of the houses were, however, crumbling ruins, neither renewed nor repaired.

The total population of Kalgan we heard variously estimated at from 60,000 to 100,000, and it is probably increasing. Enormous numbers of small carts, of the simplest construction, each drawn by a Mongolian bullock, thronged the streets and environs. They are brought from Mongolia with produce, and then sold for firewood. Wood for other purposes is brought from a place about 150 miles distant in Manchuria. Coal and iron are brought from Shan-si. Camel transport costs about 20 shillings per ton for 500 li; mule transport is dearer. Horses cost from 10 to 100 taels (30 shillings to £15) each. There is much manufacture here of willow baskets, often of great size, lined with tough varnished paper, for carrying wine, vinegar, oil, etc. Many other articles, even water-buckets, are of similar make. Hempen ropes are made for the long traces of the country carts. I saw many wooden implements for weaving and preparing wool on hand-looms; and much preparation of sheep

and goat skins, etc. In the river, near a fine bridge outside the town, men were washing wool, which they packed in large oblong baskets, sunk in the water, pounding it with hand beetles. Leather is brought in large quantities from Mongolia, and is worked up for saddle-cloths, etc., but the best leather, together with raw-hide harness, whips and other articles, comes from Russia. In some shops we found handsome furs, grey and white squirrel, fox and wolf skins, Astrakhan and Tibetan lamb skins, and curious overcoats made of ears worked with the five Wu-hu characters into devices suitable for the use of Mandarins.

A great number of camels, 400 or 500, laden mostly with brick tea, waiting to enter the pass, made an imposing show.

Small-pox prevails all the year, and most children take it in infancy, but comparatively few are scarred. There is much typhoid also, owing to the frightfully insanitary condition of the town. The climate is marvellously dry, clear, sunny and cool, with but little snow in winter, the ground being then hard frozen under a bright sun. Many children die in infancy, and their corpses are thrown into the streets to be devoured by the pariah dogs. Amongst the lower classes, there is a good deal of exposure of babies, chiefly female. Robbery and brigandage prevail in the winter months, and the roads are in consequence policed by mounted men. Wolves are rather numerous; the larger, hunting singly, carry off children from the villages all the year round and from the fields in summer, the people going about with clubs to beat them off. Foxes are found in the hills.

In the morning we clambered up the precipitous bluff overhanging the pass, and saw on one hand the long plain over which we had come, hemmed in with mountain ranges, while to the north-east and north lay the deep-set passes which run towards Mongolia and Manchuria respectively. About fifteen miles of rough climbing would by either pass have led to the Mongolian plateau, about 2,500 feet higher than Kalgan. The frosty air was brilliantly clear and the panorama magnificent. Having taken a few views with my half-plate camera, judging the focus, as the focussing screen was broken, we scrambled down, picking up a few flowers, chiefly a pretty pink stonecrop and a small iris.

CHAPTER III.

KALGAN TO PEKING BY THE MING TOMBS.

AFTER enjoying the hospitality of the American Mission, we set out on our return journey on the afternoon of May 5. As we crossed the heights and looked back towards the Great Wall, visible to the naked eye even at so great a distance, we saw, piled up behind it, great cloud-like masses which, as they afterwards whirled southwards not far from us, we understood to be the signs of a dust storm. The long wide plain with jagged mountain edges all round presented a grand view, while the willows and alders here and there lent a touch of softness to the scene.

The inn at Hsuen-hwa is a celebrated one, even in North China where the inns are superior to those in other parts of the country, although at home they would be called hovels. They usually consist of square or oblong courtyards for carts, with open stabling for mules and donkeys, poor rooms with paper windows on one or two sides, and—facing the entrance—the best apartment, a mud or brick-floored room with paper windows and a table and two chairs opposite the door; beyond, a room or two furnished with the "kang" or heated bed-place and a couple of benches.

Next day, shortly after leaving Hsuen-hwa, we saw on the roadside a pole with a small wooden cage attached, containing the head of some malefactor, and at Sha-cheng, within a few yards of our lodging, there hung in the outer gateway four similar cages, two containing heads.

The road between Sha-cheng and Huai-lai keeps close to the foot hills and detritus benches of the eastern mountain range, passing over them in fact, instead of through the valley. We passed a number of small or moderate-sized towns, the high walls of which were in various stages of disrepair, some reduced to mere crumbling mounds of earth. One or two were only partially occupied, many of the houses being in ruins, with trees growing on their remains, as well as on the walls and gateways. The inns are almost always without the walls, for the gates of the town being shut at night, belated travellers are prevented from entering. In this way a considerable growth of houses has sprung up outside the towns, leading in many cases to the erection of an outer circle of walls.

Huai-lai being a town of some importance, but commanded by neighbouring detached hills, an irregular wall has been carried out so as to enclose their crests, these being crowned with small citadels. In almost all cases the gates of the towns are surmounted by towers, and the entrance is protected by a sort of barbican so as to allow of sorties under cover, and also to hinder the gates from being rushed by an enemy. As it is, even if the outer gate of the barbican is forced, the attackers would find themselves in an enclosed courtyard completely commanded by flanking fire.

The walls invariably consist of a long curtain with flanking bastions, and the shape of the city is a square or oblong.

Two or three-storeyed towers surmount the gateways and the angles of the walls. The road runs straight across the town, and often in the centre ornamental "paitans," or wooden arches, span the

GREAT WALL.

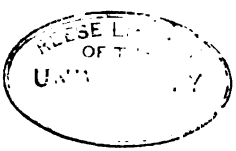
streets. The road is generally from 6 to 10 feet below the level of the raised path on each side, the frontage of which is occupied by shops, the dwelling houses being on the cross or parallel streets. Outside of Huai-lai a small shallow stream is crossed on the southern side by a ricketty timber bridge, although, a little lower down, a portion of a stone bridge remains unused.

Cha-tau, a walled-town situated a mile and a half from the entrance gate of the Wall in the Pass, is itself protected by an outlying wall and outworks with watch-towers on pyramidal hills, and right and left from it runs another wall of no mean length over the foot-hills of the mountains, curving back on itself till its flanks reach the Great Wall; the whole forming an outwork of very considerable size, requiring a large force to defend it, and designed with no small military skill. As we travel from Cha-tau the inner retrenchment of the Great Wall soon comes into view running like a ribbon over the barrier range, clinging to the side of precipitous inclines, crossing from spur to spur, following zig-zag the contours of the ridge so as frequently to double on itself, and crowning the summits of the heights with its imposing towers and bastions. Probably the original design of the Wall was due to the caprice of some Emperor who thought that so huge a work would impress the tribes to the north and deter them from attempts at invasion. As a military work, so long a line of defence of course only indicates vulnerability, and a hundredth part of the expenditure if used in fortifying the passes and providing men to defend them would have been far more effective.

Before leaving Cha-tau we climbed one of the pyramidal hills on which was a curious tower, in great disrepair, the architectural features of which were quite un-Chinese.

Quitting the Nan-kau road at a point where the telegraph line rose over a small transverse pass, we found a shorter route through a charming wooded, grassy glade, with fine hill scenery all

INNER GATE, MING TOMB.



PAVILION IN MING TOMB.

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round. After the midday rest we sent the carts on to Chang-ping-chau direct, while with the donkeys under a broiling afternoon sun, we crossed or skirted the foot-hills in an easterly direction. All these low hills were beautifully cultivated, and when we descended from them to the ravines and spurs on the western side of the plain, at the head of which the Ming tombs lie, we were in a real farming country with pleasant winding paths, substantial farmhouses, tree-shaded villages, well-tilled fields,

FIGURES IN AVENUE LEADING TO MING TOMBS.

and carefully laid-out orchards. The barley was already coming into ear, the fruit had set on the trees, and the vines were flowering. Soon we spied the first of the yellow-rayed and tree-clad Imperial tombs, shut in at the head of a ravine, while across the plain, to the east, the greater tombs were visible in the distance. We passed the near one, and skirting an outlying spur came on the next two, close together, one of which we inspected. All are of the same character. The number of court-yards varies, as also does the size of the build-

ings. The courtyards are overgrown with grass and shrubs and studded with oaks, firs, and quaintly-shaped cypress trees. The marble stairs of beautiful design, carved in low relief with marvellously twisted dragons, are grass-grown, and shrubs push through the interstices. The tiled roofs, of a beautiful brown yellow, with elaborate finials and ridging, are also overgrown with grass and shrubs, and the ground below is strewn with fallen displaced fragments. The elaborate wood brackets springing one above the other from under the widely overhanging roofs, are also decaying and their colours perishing. Still, this condition of venerable ruin makes the tombs wonderfully beautiful. The original conception of the mausolea of the thirteen Emperors of the Ming dynasty (which in the 14th century was displaced by the present Manchu dynasty) was grand. The long deep plain, hemmed in with lofty mountain ranges, forms at its northern end the great natural amphitheatre, chosen as the resting place of the great Emperors who ruled over the vastest empire in the world in its palmiest days. Down the middle of the plain runs what once was a noble causeway with marble bridges, which led, at intervals of about a mile, through and under superb "paitans" or monumental arches, the distance between the two innermost being set with huge sculptured figures of animals, warriors and mandarins; pair after pair face one another: six pairs of mandarins with long flowing garments and curiously shaped hats, two pairs of warriors, two of horses standing, and two of horses kneeling. Then follow pairs of the mythical Kirin beast, elephants, camels, dogs

PAVILION IN FRONT OF TUMULUS OF YUNG-LO'S TOMB.

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CENTRAL HALL OF YUNG-LO'S TOMB.

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and lions ; in all, I think, eighteen pairs, each image or colossus hewn from one single block. The conception of the whole is grandiose and the scene most imposing. The execution is equal, and this silent plain is truly one of the sights of the world.

We got up to Chang-ping-chau before dark, its gates being but little over a mile from the last "paitan," a huge three-arched symmetrical structure of marble, around which swineherds now lead their charges to rest during the midday heat. The town itself, like most Chinese towns of consequence hereabouts, is walled and bastioned, its streets more tree-fringed than usual. Here we rested at an unusually bad inn, and early next morning, ordering the carts to go on to Sha-ho, half way to Peking, we again set forth on donkey-back, and in about three hours travelled the seven miles to the tomb of Yung-lo, greatest of the Ming Emperors. The first approach was by a stone causeway over rising ground between orchards and growing crops. In front stood the long straight red wall, with a simple entrance, before which grew many large cypresses. The first large courtyard adjoined the vast temple, with its huge columns of teak from Siam or Burmah. Noble marble terraces of the most ornate character led to it. Behind was a smaller courtyard, with beautiful oaks in brightest green foliage. The mausoleum itself, a storeyed, pagoda-like structure, with highly enriched details, was approached through another great courtyard, by a central inclined plane, branching in two directions to the upper terrace and towers. Behind lay the vast mound of the pleasaunce surrounded by a high battlemented wall

and rising to a cone in the centre, thickly covered with cypresses, the warm resinous smell of which filled the hot air, whilst doves cooed in their branches. On a previous occasion I had walked round the exterior of the whole, and judged it to be as nearly as possible a mile in circuit. The imposing character of the buildings, their noble proportions, the lavish use of ornament and of marble, together with the general disrepair, taken with the beauty of the trees and shrubs which have grown up freely, make this particular tomb the finest of all. These oaks have very large leaves, some being over a foot in width; the surface is not smooth, as with us, but velvety, and the colour underneath is greyer, or rather, silvery. Crossing a superb cypress grove, then a dry torrent bed, and then some terraced fields, we reached a little village on the plateau where stood the next tomb. This, like most of the others, was on an outlying spur, which rose gradually as it receded, the tree-clad pleasaunce contrasting with the bare hills behind. A peep through the gate satisfied us that it was similar to the others, and we returned to Chang-ping-chau—nourishing on the way, under a fine afternoon sun, a most noble thirst. A rest in the shade of the inn, and copious potations of tea *à la chinoise*, fortified us for the journey across the richly cultivated plain to Sha-ho. That night we rested at one of the remarkably good inns for which Sha-ho is renowned, and next day, May 10, we were in Peking before noon, the last hour having been occupied in traversing from north to south the filthy Tartar city.

It was pleasant to think that during our journey

we received no insult nor saw any tendency towards insult; once or twice a man lingered in our way out of bravado, otherwise they always gave place. Much interest was shown, often of that inquiring, not to say inquisitive, nature which is annoying if harmless. Our clothes were occasionally fingered, and crowds would be attracted whenever the camera was set up, though they took good care as a rule to get out of the line of vision, showing a dislike to being taken. They generally seemed aware of its use, and would now and again by pantomime explain that they had seen such things before. Also, they would stand in front of our rooms at the inn and gape in a stolid way at all our movements, discussing with much boisterous merriment and loud guffaws our incomprehensibly foolish ways. They shewed that on the whole they looked upon us with that good-natured contempt for the barbarian which prevails in China, especially in the country districts.

Our donkey-boys and muleteers were extremely attentive and good-natured, always ready to carry out our wishes or even to anticipate them, and their cheerfulness never failed in the longest marches or the greatest heat. That they were abominably dirty, that they simply reeked of garlic, that their intolerably loud voices, boisterous laughter, and sing-song noises were causes of annoyance, were details of which they recked as little as did the inn servants when they marched in and out of our rooms at any moment, or stayed in them at pleasure, examining us and our appliances and freely discussing all. On the road, innumerable were the efforts to draw us into conversation, and

often we passed the time of day with no words but with a cheery grimace. Clearly filth does not kill, for nothing could exceed the healthy, well-cared-for appearance of the population. The men are tall, well-made, and big boned ; the women are smaller relatively in stature owing to the custom, universal even among the poorest classes, of binding the feet of the girls at an early age ; at Kalgan these were very much compressed and smaller than elsewhere in China, we were told, except in Fu-chau. Nevertheless the women seemed healthy, and the children, countless in number, were as well-formed and well-nourished little brats as they could be.

The country which we passed over, though not nearly so fertile as in the middle of the valley, not only supported a tolerably large population—judging by the numerous villages and towns—but also provided forage and provender for the enormous trains of camels, pack-horses, mules and donkeys which pass both ways each day. Beggars were numerous but showed no signs of actual want, in many cases being very able-bodied indeed. Of ophthalmia, which, from the prevalence of dust and dirt, one would expect to prevail, there was exceedingly little. Skin diseases were most in evidence, but not to any serious extent. We met one very bad case of leprosy. Nor was there much of deformity, and in only a few cases was idiocy or insanity noticeable. Suicide is common, and for comparatively slight causes, not infrequently from revenge ; for to die at a man's door is to bring much evil upon him. One's general impression was of a healthy, well-contented people,

very poor indeed, but able to live cheaply. Europeans cannot get over the feeling that people so intelligent, hard-working, and good-tempered, deserve something better than their present conditions of existence.

CHAPTER IV.

PEKING TO MUKDEN.

On May 14, K—— and I set out for Chifu, which we reached on the 16th, and, four days later, the steamer *Tam-sui*, on its way to Niuchwang, came into port. The vessel had already its full number of passengers, but the captain yielding to our solicitations, shared his cabin with K——, while Mr. Chow and I were accommodated on the saloon floor and the settee. Mr. Chow was a Chinese who had been educated in America, and was now employed as K——'s secretary.

The town of Niuchwang, properly so called, stands about thirty miles up the Liao-ho, but the name is now given also to the port (Ying-kau), a few miles above the mouth of the river. The bar, which lies far out, can be crossed by vessels drawing sixteen or seventeen feet. The river is far finer and larger than the Pei-ho, but as yellow and mud-laden. The plain, of the same silicious alluvium or " loess " found throughout North China, stretches far inland, but on its eastern side is visible the chain of low mountains which runs down to Port Arthur, and forms the " Regent's Sword," or Liao-

Tung peninsula. Some poor earthworks stand at the river entrance and on the marshes, where are many small crabs, curlew, whimbrel, and oyster-catchers. Below the European settlement on the right bank the long embankment earthworks of the new railway to Shan-hai-kwan stretch down to the water, and on the left bank, a little higher up, come into view countless tiers of junks of all sizes and shapes. We landed on Sunday the 21st, and took up our quarters at a boarding house, there being no hotel and no club. The old concession is small and lies on the left bank of the river. The Japanese have obtained a large area next to the railway, and adjoining this is the new British concession. The Russian camp was three miles higher up at Niu-cha-teng, at the bend of the river which, as the chief engineer told me, had during the past year cut its way 140 feet into the bank. Lower down the bank is protected by ingenious groynes, made of bundles of reeds weighted with earth and confined by piles, but these constantly require repair. Vast masses of sleepers, rails and stores, besides boilers and other parts of some twenty-two large main-line locomotives, cumbered the ground, everything lying about promiscuously, unprotected from the weather, and seriously damaged in transit and in landing. Numerous shops and stores had sprung up, constructed in the rudest manner of rough planks with galvanized corrugated roofs, such as could scarcely be called even temporarily adequate for the erection of machinery. Yet the number of Russians employed on these works seemed enormous when compared with K——'s tiny European staff.

By the 25th of May I had completed my prepara-

tions for riding to Mukden, the ancient capital of the Manchu dynasty. I had hired a small cart of the Peking type, narrow wheeled, well-built and springless, drawn by two splendid North China mules. The sturdy six-foot muleteer was to receive two dollars (about six shillings) per day, and out of this to find food and lodging for himself and mules. My "boy" or personal attendant, picked up in Ying-kau, was promised twenty dollars per month, finding himself in food, etc., this being about double what residents pay their servants. The Mafoo was a beardless boy of seventeen or eighteen, to all appearance, but owned to a wife and family. He was kindly lent to me by Mr. W——, as were also the two ponies; one grey with good paces, the other a sturdy black stallion, rough and a trifle lazy.

I should have started early, so as to do the hundred li, or 33 miles, the recognised daily distance for a cart to travel, but as the cart did not start till 11, nor I, on the black pony, till 3, we ended our day's march over the heavy roads only 75 li from Ying-kau. A few miles out we crossed the Russian branch railroad from Ying-kau running east to join the main north-and-south line from Siberia to Port Arthur. It was a mere earth embankment slightly raised above the level of the country, just wide enough to take a pair of rails, unballasted, and rough in the extreme—a mere contractor's line in fact. The country seemed fertile and was certainly well tilled, the fields being kept beautifully clean. Willows and poplars grow luxuriantly near the villages, and the same small blue iris we had seen on the Peking-Kalgan road was common here.

We saw magpies, crows, larks and doves, and one hare.

Tired though I was, I had little rest during the night. The inns here are of different construction from those on the Peking-Kalgan road. Instead of having rooms built round a quadrangle, they consist of one long building with a kitchen in the middle. A "kang" or raised place to sit or sleep on runs its whole length and, as this was warm, though we had a mattress over it and kept windows open, we could not sleep for heat. Loud conversation was kept up in the next compartment and sing-song voices reached us from an adjacent house, while out of doors dogs barked and mules squealed and whinneyed incessantly. Soon after four in the morning I went out and enjoyed the fresh cool air, as I walked by the growing crops and through leafy villages and pleasant homesteads. The houses were much neater than those near Peking, many well thatched or tiled, stone-walled or partly so, and, if of mud, protected by copings. An air of prosperity prevailed; the people were well nourished, independent-looking and always civil. The common salutation seemed to be "Whence and whither going?"; the question "Yenguezi?" (English?) generally followed. A missionary in Ying-kau told me that "English" was a sure passport to favour compared with "Russian."

It was nearly six o'clock when, next morning, we resumed our journey, I going on foot to spare my pony, which was a little saddle-galled, and at ten we reached Hai-cheng, 35 li.

The low, bare and ragged hill range on the right drew nearer, and near it was the "Eastern Chinese

Railway," as the Russians euphemistically style it. Up to Hai-cheng the country is dead level and the line is carried on a low embankment 16 to 18 feet wide. The gauge is the Russian one of five feet—three-and-a-half inches wider than ours. The sleepers, of various width and depth, are from seven to eight feet long, and project unevenly on either side. Most of them are rough hewn, a few sawn; the wood is very inferior, full of shakes and cracks; very few, in fact, would pass the most ordinary inspection. There was no appearance of engines having passed along the line, which, when looked at in the plane of its direction or that of its level, presented a series of sinuous curves, lateral and vertical. Approaching Hai-cheng, it bends to the left through a small rock cutting, and, crossing the river, passes to the west of the town. We crossed rather higher, the horses and cart fording the stream where it was narrow and but a few inches deep, while the foot passengers passed over by a single-plank bridge on trestles. The full width of the river is, however, about two hundred yards or more, a heavy coarse sand-bed showing the effect of torrential rains. This small town was the first walled town we had come to; the walls were in fair condition, brick outside with stone rivetted on inside, and with towers over the gates, but no barbican. At the inn—a poor place—a crowd assembled, and from every coign of vantage watched my movements and repast. Afterwards one or two old men came in and were most friendly, "Yenguezi fingho" ("English very good") occurring frequently in their remarks. They examined my boots and clothes with attention and

sampled the butt ends of my cigars. After two hours' rest I sent the carts on, determining myself to ride along the railway. For some six or seven miles the rails were laid, but the irregularities noticed on the other side of Hai-cheng were still more marked and in a great many places the embankment had subsided, leaving the rails *en l'air*, or one side had fallen, leaving the other elevated. At this distance I struck the rail-head camp. A number of Russians, with some soldiers, were having their midday "chow" and took no notice of me. A crowd of several hundred Chinese, mostly children, girls and women, squatted on the embankments all round, thus showing that this particular gang, at all events, caused no consternation, such as I had heard of, among the womankind. A few hundred yards beyond was a deepish cutting over a gully with a small running stream some 60 or 70 yards wide. The line was carried over on a succession of small piers made of unhewn stones with rubble and clay inside, and some trivial timbering. The structure might carry a few light construction wagons of a type which I saw here, but certainly not a train and engine; nor could it stand the least rush of water.

North of Hai-cheng the country becomes undulating, the height of the mountain spurs on the east increases, and some few miles in front, two saddle-backed hills, between which passes the railway line, stretch across the plain. Large villages and homesteads abound, shaded with poplars and willows, the latter having magnificent clusters of mistletoe. The grave-yards, among fir and other trees, are well tended and are often the most picturesque objects

in the landscape. There seems to be one belonging to each family on its own property.

A whirlwind, common enough on these plains, made a great commotion at one village, sending a column of dust across the fields and carrying off the clothes of the coolies who were at work on the railway. Otherwise the changing blue, red, and purple lights and the beautiful delicate clouds overhead, made our journey very pleasant the whole day, and before night we reached Teng-au.

Here there was apparently some dread of brigands against whose inroads the people of the inn made strenuous efforts to close the shutters, efforts which I stoutly resisted. In the morning I sent the carts on their way to Liao-yang, a walled town distant about 75 li, and then set out on horseback towards the railway excavations, hoping to find an easy road over the prepared ground. This, however, was so broken by culverts and watercourses that progress was slow. Beyond the saddle-back hills seen the day before, I had a view of a tall pagoda, just outside the walls of Liao-yang, erected in the Ming period and now used as the divisional headquarters of the railway line. Here the railway works were in a backward condition, owing to the fact that several contractors who had under-estimated the cost of the work had absconded, and the coolies, underpaid and badly treated, were deserting by hundreds.

During the day I saw several falcons with white-ringed necks, also a very pretty little tern, whose attitudes and quivering wings were very noticeable. I noticed also a large dark-blue anemone, a beautiful wild dog-rose, rich crimson and free flowering, a

little yellow speedwell, and, on a marsh, what looked like hepatica. During the midday and afternoon heats of this and the preceding days the water mirage was a common feature of the landscape.

At Liao-yang, a prosperous town, I enjoyed the hospitality of the Scotch Presbyterian Mission, where, having drunk many cups of tea, I was taken over the hospital. The patients, several of whom had been operated on in the morning, were cheerfully sitting or lying on their couches of hard matting. One man, from whose shin a large piece of diseased bone had been taken, was moaning. Except when their wounds are being dressed the patients get little attention, as there is difficulty in training Chinese as nurses. In a separate ward was a Russian suffering from fever; there had been a number of patients of this nationality. In the gardens were many interesting plants, indigenous and foreign. Foreign fruit, however, soon degenerates, apples, pears, etc., becoming woody, stringy, and tasteless. Black Hamburg and other grapes were growing in the open and fruiting well, as also plums, currants, peaches, etc., but gooseberries Dr. Westwater had not yet succeeded in raising, with the exception of a very small inferior American kind.

The Russians, we were told, were meeting with a good deal of difficulty on account of the bad conduct of the troops. Until lately the women of the country moved about freely and were not afraid of foreigners; now at the sight of one, as I had myself observed, they run for their lives. Most of the women I saw were, probably because of their unbound feet, of stature and physique corresponding with those of the men. Many of the girls were

strapping lasses, and, though not often approaching to good looks, were, with their free movements and carriage, pleasanter to the eye than the Chinese women in other places. The men were fine big fellows, independent in manner, but civil enough as a rule, though they did not move out of the way here as elsewhere. At one place a small well-dressed boy of ten or eleven stood in front of me and used, as I fancied, opprobrious language, of which I took no notice, and at last a greybeard took him to task. Another time, while waiting for the horses and cart near a small village inn, where a group of men stood, I heard shouts, evidently meant to be offensive. My back was turned towards them and I walked away, but soon heard approaching footsteps and insulting voices. Waiting until they were about ten or fifteen yards off, I turned sharply and confronted two giants of over six feet on a narrow footpath some five or six feet above the road-level, barely wide enough for two persons. One of them was over middle age, and, passing him by, came up to the second, a young and powerful man. Giving him the shoulder abruptly I rolled him down the bank, at the foot of which he picked himself up muttering words of which I took no notice. The group burst out laughing, so I imagined the village bully had met with a reverse not displeasing to them.

On leaving Liao-yang we had to cross a clear, quick-running river, by a bridge constructed of wood trestles and a couple of longitudinals, across which were lain thick straw and reed bundles, over which foot, horse and wheel traffic passed easily enough. Pushing along at a sharp trot over a deeply rutted road, we were annoyed at the villages by the hordes

of large savage dogs, some of which seemed half collie half deerhound, while others looked more like huge grey wolves. These brutes, barking and jumping at the horses' flanks and our legs, were only kept off by the judicious application of the stick. We reached Chang-tai-yi just after dark, and I had a fairly comfortable room at the inn, where, with the windows removed, I was able to breathe the fresh air instead of the usual close and opium-saturated atmosphere of a Chinese inn. At half-past ten I had peremptorily to order silence in the room adjoining.

Before five o'clock next morning we resumed our march. Being too stiff to ride, I walked nearly all the 55 li to Shan-li-pu, where we ate and rested for an hour and a half, starting again at one. The weather then became dull, and very sultry and oppressive. The road lay over most uninteresting country—flat, except for a few undulations. The sameness of the region was disagreeable, sometimes exasperating. The earth was always yellow mud, bounded with barren hills. The perpetual poplars and willows became monotonous. Yellow faces stared at us in the mud villages; where water existed, it was muddy; all the roads were vile, and everywhere was unspeakable filth—were it not for the dust and the dry desiccating atmosphere, the condition of things would be still worse. In this district the small water-courses are spanned by substantial, dressed-stone bridges of simple construction, but provided with flanking wings to protect the piers and properly conduct the water.

Ten li from Mukden we crossed a branch of the Liao-ho. A wide area of loose sand on each side

extends from the low banks to the channel of quick-running, fairly clear water. The trestle bridge, the north end of which had fallen in, was only used for foot traffic, a rather deep ford just below being used by the carts. The high walls and towers of Mukden—a miniature Peking—soon came into view. The place is interesting as having been the capital of the Manchus before they overcame China proper. Having walked over 30 miles during the day, I was not sorry to enter the city. To my surprise, however, we were refused admittance at one inn after another, the feeling towards foreigners, quite friendly until lately, having undergone a great change, owing to the conduct of the Russians. The attitude of the people was barely civil, insulting epithets being freely used by the children and the younger men. At length we were admitted, with no good-will, to an inn outside the walls. My room fairly reeked of opium, and when I opened the windows, opium fumes flowed in from an adjoining room, occupied by Chinese gentlemen. As night drew on, what with gambling, opium-smoking, and playing on a sort of mandolin, they seemed to have a high time; but their revelry did not disturb my repose, and I slept till four in the morning.

CHAPTER V.

MUKDEN—THE TOMBS—RETURN TO PEKING.

THE following day was rainy, and, hiring a cart, I went in the morning to the Presbyterian Mission with a letter of introduction from Dr. Daly of Ying-kau. I found Dr. Christie and his household packing up to go some twenty miles to the hills for a change, but, the weather preventing their start, I was very kindly received and entertained till three o'clock. In the Mission hospital are generally about a hundred in-patients and an average list of over two hundred out-patients. The Chinese, though not appreciative of our medicines, think a great deal of European surgery. The patients show great fortitude in bearing operations, and make excellent recoveries. It was pleasant to see the good relations evinced both by the doctor's manner and by the gratitude of his patients. There were many cases of ophthalmia, and many of amputation. I saw one poor, stunted, little fellow of ten years—looking little more than five—who had been exposed by strolling actors to die by the roadside, and who was indeed nearly dead when rescued. A number of surgical cases are treated by the Chinese assistants: they are very neat in operating, but apt to lose

their heads in critical cases. The women's hospital is separate and attended by lady-doctors. In Manchuria there were some fifteen thousand catechumens and the list of applicants amounted to over eight thousand, though the conditions of entry and probation had been made more and more severe. The Governor of the Province and the officials were well disposed towards this Mission, which seemed to be composed of hard-headed Scotchmen who went about things in a practical way. The converts were drawn from the tradespeople, farmers, and lower classes. Dr. Christie informed me that the merchants favour the extension of the railroads, but the agrarian classes object very much to the occupation of their land for railway purposes, especially as they receive no compensation from the Russians, who declare that the land is a grant to them from the Chinese Government and to that Government the landowners must look for compensation. Such treatment is keenly resented, and as, during the Japanese war, the people had secured many cast-away rifles and large quantities of ammunition a serious *émeute* occurred, after which a joint-commission of Chinese and Russian officials visited the villages and persuaded the proprietors to give up their lands peaceably, the Russians promising to pay *eventually*. In a recent case the Russians staked out a large area, saying that they intended it for the site of a new town, and, without making any payment, told the proprietor that if he sowed crops on that land he should not reap them.

The gates of the town are closed at sundown and the keys sent to the Viceroy's Yamen. One day

a party of Russian soldiers came in, spent a riotous evening, and then, finding the gates closed, proceeded to smash the padlock and remove the iron bars. The punishment for allowing the gates to be opened is death, but on this occasion the keeper and several minor officials were let off with dismissal and degradation. Altogether, Russia does not seem to be assimilating this province with her usual success.

Dr. Christie corrected my impression that most of the people in the province were Manchus; they are chiefly immigrants from Shantung and Honan, but the women have largely adopted the Manchu dress, coiffure, and unbound feet. Coming back from the Mission we passed the Emperor's palace, a structure with the usual yellow and green tiles, not well kept up. I was not permitted to enter.

Next morning rain threatened but was not actually falling, so I ordered the cart to be got ready for a journey to the Mausoleum of the Manchu Kings, 20 or 30 li to the north. Having made inquiries at the house of "one Chinese gentleman," apparently an antiquary, to whom my "boy" conducted me, I took the word "Bati" to be the name of the place where the tombs are, and "Boy" afterwards seemed quite clear as to the direction. So off we went, I wedged up in the cart with a pillow and a camera. After the rain the roads were horrible, those in Mukden a morass of foul, vile-smelling, black filth; outside, a waste of greasy, yellow mud, into which the cart sank axle deep, lurching and tumbling like a ship at sea. The country was generally flat, but, at some distance, we came to low hills. About 24 li from Mukden we inquired at a village and were

directed to go 6 li further on. There we found a hamlet called Sam-hwa, and, leaving the cart, I climbed in a pelting rain the nearest hill. Having searched in vain for tombs, I judged that in the circumstances, the proper course was to return to Mukden. In the cart I was rocked to sleep, and when I awoke we were travelling in pretty lanes with grassy banks, over a hillocky country with pleasant farms and a fair amount of timber. We were now going south-east, making for tombs which I knew lay 10 or 15 li to the east of the city. Soon we reached three moderate-sized tombs with plastered domes, standing inside a walled and tree-planted enclosure, each fronted by a handsome ornamental "paitan." Here I took a couple of photographs, but the watery sun failed, rain cut short our investigations, and we wended our way back by a country road. The main roads are very monotonous, with strings of villages about five li apart, full of inns, whereas the country roads are less populous and their villages more picturesque. The long mean approaches to Mukden and the indescribable filth of the city itself give one most unpleasant sensations. During the day I had been amused at the way in which my irascible little Cantonese "boy" bullied the big carter, who on such occasions shewed his sense of humour by exchanging with me a sympathic grin. When we reached our suburban inn I gave the big man a twenty-cent piece with the magic word "samshic" (rice-spirit), at which his face expanded and he "chin-chinned" profusely. He certainly deserved a drink, for, all day, exposed half-naked to the weather, he had urged his team along under con-

ditions which would have distracted most charioteers. As for the poor mules, after their long day's work they had to stand all night exposed to the weather in a sodden yard, tied to their mangers. Bruised and broken, I was glad to re-enter the inn, and, despite the twingle-twangle of the neighbouring mandolin, I was soon asleep. I was the first foreigner, it seemed, who had stopped at this particular inn, and I had been reluctantly received, but when in the morning I finally quitted it, disgusted with Mukden, all came and "chin-chinned," apparently indicating that they had not found the Britisher so very obnoxious after all.

I directed the "boy" to take me to the Mausoleum to the east, and by eleven o'clock we reached a long low hill, on which was a wood, the first I had seen in North China. Leaving carts and horses in the village hard by, I took the path to the tombs. It led from the foot of the hill through pleasant glades with poplar, pine, willow, oak, hawthorn and other trees, with a thick undergrowth. I also saw columbines and Solomon's seal, but no ferns. Cuckoos were calling, hawks added their querulous cries, and many small birds were singing very sweetly. It was nothing grand—only a pleasant copse, such as are common in every county of the old country—but it was uncommon and delightful in North China.

A rise and turn in the path brought me face to face with the entrance portal, a handsome and well-kept little gate-way, with yellow-tiled roof, finials and ridging of grotesques, all in the approved Chinese style. The steps were clean; the doors, newly painted red, had brass knockers. When we

came in sight, the doors were promptly shut, and admittance was definitely refused. We followed a path which ran beside a low red wall into the thicket, and after walking 60 or 70 yards found part of the wall in ruins. I could have stepped over, and was much minded to do so, the path being barred only by a soldier and three or four young men and boys, but as they were only carrying out orders, and might have got into trouble, I forbore. Inside there seemed to be a number of buildings, but not on the scale of the Ming tombs. Walking some distance to our rear we saw the Mausoleum proper, a huge dome, rising from the ground and surrounded by a high inner wall. It contained, we were informed, the remains of five of the old Manchu Kings.

Before I got back to the village inn it had begun to rain heavily. We had to take shelter in a room of the village inn, where, on removing one of the window frames to admit fresh air, I immediately attracted an interested crowd of spectators, while the doorway on the opposite side was thronged with the staring guests and servants of the inn. I found that if I fixed a steady gaze on some particular individual, his stare became uneasy, his eyes turned elsewhere, and after attempting two or three times to return to the charge, he at last went away. These proceedings were noticed by the crowd at the window, and the youngsters went off into explosions of laughter on each occasion of discomfiture. I was able repeatedly to clear the whole crowd away for a little while; but, as they always returned, the game was not worth the candle.

When the rain abated we started again, and having, much against my desire and only in consequence of an accident which befel the cart, again passed through Mukden, I rode on to a curious monument, much out of repair, a few li from the river. This I photographed, and whilst I did so the priest in charge came up and was most amicable, leading me off, as I supposed, to see something special, but he only took me to his house, where he seated me and, as I guessed, offered me a drink. We parted excellent friends, each having made several speeches in a tongue unknown to the other.

The river was not in the least swollen by the three days' heavy rain, and we forded it easily. The earth retained the rain so that the road was a morass, through which the draught animals ploughed heavily, the cart sinking axle-deep at every angle of inclination. After we had struggled for some 15 li through the quagmire, it grew dark, and I pushed on with the mafoo to the large village of Shih-li-ho, the whole fetid length of which we had to traverse to reach the inn. Before the door my mafoo began to shout vociferously, and soon half a score of men came out, who, after they had satisfied themselves as to my nationality, destination, and " from whence," refused us admittance, laughing boisterously as the Chinese do on such occasions, perhaps to cover their real feelings. After five minutes' wrangling and altercation the mafoo gave in, and amidst peals of laughter we turned to try a lesser inn a few hundred yards behind. Here we were admitted, but the rooms were miserable, and even at the better end afforded little or no privacy.

Next day (June 1) we marched 100 li to Liao-yang,

over a track with the main features of which we were already familiar. In the morning there was a dense mist, through which we could see dimly, a few score yards off, the outline of a great pagoda. The roads were bad and dangerous, but about nine o'clock the sun shone out strong and warm, and the ground dried so rapidly that by evening it was in many places caked and crusted hard. During the day we saw the familiar long strings of coolies plodding through the mud, their loins girded and umbrellas slung over their shoulders musket-wise by a strap. Small parties of soldiers passed us, each carrying his umbrella as well as his rifle and bandolier stuffed with ammunition, the rims of the cartridges being often so worn down as to make it doubtful if the extractor would work. Now and then we met a coolie and his wife, he carrying one or more little naked, bright-looking babies in baskets, in the same way as pigs or poultry are carried. Herds of black swine were being driven along, and the villages swarmed with them.

At Liao-yang I revisited the hospital, and had much interesting conversation with Dr. Westerfield. The implicit trust of the patients was noticeable, and the fortitude with which they lay down on the operating table or stood to bear painful dressings, probings, or cuttings. It was plain that the good doctor liked the Chinese, and did not despise the notions he found underlying many customs which to Europeans seem reprehensible. He asserted that he had never heard of one well-authenticated case of infanticide, though the practice of casting out dying children was common. This practice, however, had its origin in religious notions and was not

indulged in heartlessly, for he had often seen the poor mother sitting near, weeping and lamenting for hours. Chinese exclusiveness had been unable to resist the kindly sympathy and the surgical skill of the missionaries who, having been first opposed and thwarted and then tolerated, had at length been protected, encouraged, and openly invited by the authorities.

I paid a visit to the pagoda, the Russian railway divisional headquarters, and was kindly received by Mr. R——, one of the engineers, who gave me a good deal of information about the line. The bridge-work which was in progress was to be all of timber, for much would have to be done before permanent structures could be erected. On this line I saw a much larger number of Europeans, both for the direction and execution of the work, than are to be seen on the English-built lines where the staff is the merest handful, one Englishman doing work for which ten, or even twenty, of other nationalities would be employed. Most of the soldiers forming the so-called Railway Military Police were Reservists taken from all branches of the Russian army. There were no true Cossacks amongst them, though some mounted men wearing a sort of Cossack uniform were called Cossacks. Over the pagoda floated the flag of the Chinese Eastern Railway, as it is called, the dragon, carrying on its upper portion the white, blue, and red horizontal stripes of the Russian national flag.

Resuming the march southwards soon after midday (June 2) we passed many poverty-stricken and deserted villages, two-thirds of the houses being in ruins, destroyed principally by the Chinese

troops during the war with Japan. Hereabouts the Japanese forces, after fighting one sharp action at Si-mu-cheng, had debouched on to the plain and had then taken Hai-cheng, Niu-chwang, and Ying-kau, the last named having fallen without resistance. At one village I happened to pass close to the open window of a cottage, near which a young woman was sitting. The instant she saw me she shrieked and fled, shewing dread of the foreigner.

The following day, after passing Hai-cheng, we witnessed one of the remarkable cloud phenomena seen in North China, wisps of cloud trailing over the hills, with strange breaks of light between, boding rain. Resolving to reach Ying-kau, distant 110 li, that night, I left the mules and cart to come at leisure, and hastened forward with the mafoo. We had to seek shelter from the passing storms, and frequently in the afternoon we saw heavy storms bursting on different parts of the mountains. Progress over the greasy black clay was difficult, but we saw, miles a-head, before the sun went down, the forest of junk masts which mark Ying-kau. Turning sharply a corner of a village my horse nearly ran over a couple of wood cages, connected by a bamboo, which the coolie in charge had laid down on the path while he sat laughing and chatting at the door of a little tea-house. Each cage contained a freshly severed human head, entrusted to the coolie to be exposed at the place where the crime for which the victim had suffered had been committed.

The horses were at length quite exhausted, and when we reached the Russian camp, three miles above Ying-kau, I left them to the mafoo and

walked, getting in at a quarter before eight, and so carrying out my morning's intention of doing the 60 miles in the day. After resting for a day and using remedies for my wrist, which had been sprained by a fall, I visited the Russian camp and interviewed the chief officer, Mr. T——, who was very civil and communicative. Among other matters, I asked him about the capacity of coolies for earth-work, and their wage, and his answer was that they cost 65 cents per day and handled half of a seven foot cube—roughly about 13 tons—so that for double the pay received on K——'s line, they did just about half the work. As to the appropriation of land for railway purposes by Russia, he said that that was the affair of the Chinese Government, and he showed me the card of the Chinese official deputed to see to this, which ran :

"Tcheou-lau-Ting,
"Général,
"Agent attaché par ordre du Tsung-li-yamen au Chemin de Fer Chinois de l'Est pour l'expropriation des terrains."

Mr. T—— referred to some part of the Northern Line as presenting very serious difficulties owing to mountains, trackless forests, and ungovernable rivers, a district practically unsurveyed, unmapped, and untravelled. He thought that the river question generally was the one likely to give most trouble. I learned from one of the pilots at Ying-kau that during the great flood of 1888 the river ran for 15 or 16 days at from four to six feet above spring-tide level, the vessels in port having been unaffected by flood-tide, riding always to up-stream anchor. This gives a rise of at least 20 feet at Ying-kau, and I

think I am not far wrong in taking the rise at not less than 30 feet at Mukden, where the banks were overflowed and the whole country inundated.

From Mr. H——, well-known for his travels in and work on Western China, I received valuable hints about a route for tapping the wealthy Szechwan Province by other than the Yangtsze route.

On the 8th, I left in the s.s. *Toonan* for Tientsin, where I found that the extraordinary indifference of our Government to the progress of events in North China was the usual subject of conversation. On June 13 I went to Peking, taking the new road (not yet open to the public), by which I avoided some intolerable nuisances. Within the Tartar City it was a surprise to find Legation Street "up," and being macadamised.

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICS AND MISSIONARIES IN PEKING AND ON THE LOWER YANGTSZE.

Soon after my arrival I called on ———, and found him discontented. A year ago the Chinese Government entered into a contract that the Shanghai and Hong Kong Bank should finance the construction of the Shan-hai-kwan—Niuchwang extension railway, the security to the bondholders being, as usual, the line itself and its earnings. This contract having been actually signed, sealed and delivered, the Russians protested, and *our* Government forced the Bank to rescind the contract and enter into a new one by which they take no lien on the railway outside the Wall, but only on its *receipts*. After this contract was ratified, an issue was made to the British public, the Government authorising the Bank to publish the fact that it stood sponsor. Then came fresh Russian opposition which was, however, withdrawn and a more insidious step taken: the Chinese Railway Director was suddenly removed, and one Chang-yen-mow, or Chang-yi, as he is called, was substituted. This upstart now plays all sorts of tricks, trying to

upset the arrangements on which the capital was raised and so break faith with the bondholders.

The Government recently came to an arrangement with Russia that we are not to interfere with her outside the Great Wall and within that she is not to enter. Hardly is the ink dry when Peking is startled by an official application from Russia to permit her to connect her Manchurian Railway with Peking by a line running parallel with the Niu-chwang-Shan-hai-kwan-Peking line in which British capital has been sunk, and the result apparently is that a clause in the Anglo-Russian Agreement gives them permission to construct a line from their Manchurian road "in a south-westerly direction."

The Shanghai and Hong Kong Bank, seeing the importance of connecting the Peking line with Kalgan, along the great caravan road to Mongolia and Siberia, cabled to the Foreign Office asking to be supported in an application to the Chinese Government for the right to do so. This having been promised, their Peking agent applied to the Tsung-li-yamen through the British Legation for the necessary permit, but was informed that it could not be given, as part of the route to be traversed was beyond the Great Wall. Now, Kalgan lies just *inside* the Great Wall of China. It is true that a second wall was built within the Great Wall, forming an inner retrenchment, such as is common in large military works, but this is not the Great Wall of China. The British Foreign Office, however decided that the application could not be supported. So that while Russia is (if the Agreement referred to is really concluded) permitted to penetrate the

sphere inside the Wall, right up to the very gates of Peking, England must not exercise her rights within her own sphere.

Notwithstanding the inactivity of the British Government, accounted for by the troubles in South Africa, K—— was firmly holding his own against Chinese officials. Chang-yi had memorialised the Throne on the subject of the Railways of which he was the Chief Director, condemning their condition and construction, matters of which he was ignorant, and passing some sharp strictures on K——. Of these strictures K—— promptly demanded a written retractation, and this demand became the subject of lengthy negotiations. At an interview with Li-Hsu, the Viceroy, and Chau, a member of the Railway Board, K—— was requested to accept an indirect and verbal apology, since it was contrary to Chinese custom for a superior official to admit to an inferior that he had been in the wrong. K——, however, affirmed that the European custom was quite the reverse, that he meant to be treated as a European, that though he had come to Peking to please old friends like the Viceroy and others, and, to show that he was willing to discuss the position, if his first demand was not complied with, he would continue his work, ignoring Chang-yi. They could of course dismiss him if they chose ; but that was an affair for the English bondholders and for the English Government. The adjustment of the dispute was postponed, and next morning Chau appeared at the hotel to make a further effort, hinting that Chang-yi, though obstinate, might yield, but that if he did so, he would certainly make himself disagreeable afterwards.

Other possible solutions of the difficulty were the dismissal of K—— and the resignation of Chang-yi, either of which K—— expressed himself as willing to accept with fortitude. This firmness was very trying to Chau, who had a great reputation as a peacemaker, and it was disconcerting to Chang-yi, who, having "more Sinico," bought his appointment, had not only sunk his own means in doing so, but had got deeply into debt with the Palace party, whose tool he therefore was.

Of course both he and they looked to recoup themselves largely on handling the money to be expended from the British loan for the construction of the Niu-chwang extension railway, and also from the revenues therefrom.

Consequently K——, who had the money paid to him as required for the railway works by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and kept a tight hold on it, was anything but a *persona grata*, and nothing would have pleased the Palace party and their Russian backers better than his removal. In the afternoon he was bidden to the Tsung-li-Yamen, where, after some futile discussion, he was informed that his demand could not be acceded to and he received his dismissal, a letter confirming which would be sent to him. Hsu added that it grieved him that things should have come to such a pass since he had long known and respected K—— as an able and upright man. K—— replied that Hsu need not be troubled on his account, as he intended to go on with his duties, until removed by the English Government, and that he counted on another twenty years' service in his present position. The result was that in the course of the evening he

received an intimation that the decision of the afternoon had been reversed, and that Chang-yi had yielded. It should be observed that in the course of this dispute K—— made no reference to, nor received assistance from, the Legation, whose interference was to be dreaded, lest it should lead to official pressure towards compliance on the part of K——.

Such were the topics which had interest for the British Community in Peking. Lord Charles Beresford's article in the *North American Review*, concerning the scheme of "the open door," was keenly discussed. Colonel Browne's Report on Manchuria, apart from the information it gave as to the country and its people, seemed but a record of the befoolment of the British. The influence of the Japanese in Chinese politics was regarded hopefully, while the greed of the European powers, and the utter rottenness of government in China, owing to the selfishness and incapacity of her ministers, were painful to contemplate.

One morning I had a visit from the little Abbé de G——, who had just returned from a journey to the Trappist monastery in the hills of the West. He spoke of the extreme rigour of the establishment, which contained between fifty and sixty people, nearly all Chinese, supporting themselves by agriculture. Next day he came by invitation to breakfast, and, in his cool, thin, Chinese dress, shaven crown, and delicate features, he fairly brimmed over with information, friendliness and courtesy. I asked him why their Order permitted no return to their native country. He said for three reasons: 1st, *Pénitence*, or, more correctly,

a life of self-renunciation; 2nd, the advantage to the Mission of continuous unbroken working—which put it out of the power of the Chinese to allege, as they were apt to do—however unreasonably—of other Missions, that the missionaries simply came out to China to make fortunes. Of course there were minor advantages, such as the saving of money, which would otherwise be spent in travelling; 3rd, it was a *véritable supplice* to tear themselves away from home and family, and to return would upset them in their work, and so interfere with its usefulness. He admitted that there was some loss on the other hand, since men long absent get out of touch with civilization, and sometimes also melancholy; hence it was desirable at times to *se refraichir*, and he advocated an occasional visit to Shanghai and mixing there with men from Europe. It is difficult to describe the combined frankness and delicacy with which he made this avowal, or the impression of genuineness which he created in this as in other things, to say nothing of the charm of manner which characterised the *vrai gentilhomme français*.

He repeated his invitation to Szechwan, and offered to make my travels there pleasant and comfortable by means of their numerous Missions.

One afternoon I found awaiting me the cards of Bishop Favier and the Abbé de G——, accompanied by a copy (No. 700) of the huge and beautiful work on "Péking (*Histoire et description*)," compiled, printed and published, with fine and characteristic engravings, at the Imprimerie des Lazaristes, Pétang in Peking, and inscribed to me in the following words:

à Mr. J. Grant Birch,
Souvenir d'une visite au Pétang, Mai, 1899.
Alph. Favier.
Ev. Vic. Apost. de Péking.
Hommage reconnaissant d'un passager du Hsui-chi.
Mer de Chine. Avril, 1899.
J. de Guébriant,
Provicaire Sutchuen méridional.

This was a charming surprise, for not only is the book a most valuable and interesting one because written by the widely beloved Père Favier (now Bishop of these provinces), a man of some forty years' life in China—and printed and illustrated by the Chinese converts of the "*Mission dite de St. Lazare*"—but it was so graceful an acknowledgment of a short friendship that it gave me an unusual degree of pleasure. I found my French unequal to the expression of my feelings, and had to fall back on English, in which, rather than in his own beautiful language, as I told the Abbé, I could do more justice to them. I hope my boys will prize it in after days and their children after them.

A close, damp, hot air did not lessen the pleasure of my farewell to Peking, and (June 22) I saw its streets and walls disappear with all the happiness of "the homeward-bound." In the train the conversation was political. One traveller affirmed that at the Tsung-li-Yamen, the day before, all the applications made on behalf of the British Government respecting the Fleming murder, the Peking Syndicate, and other matters had been negatived—almost contemptuously. Another gave us the history of the acquisition of Kiau-chau by Germany as (he said) he had heard it from the German Minister

himself shortly before he left China. The narrative, apparently trustworthy, was as follows. The Minister had explained that, on his coming, it was his great object to acquire a port for his country. After studying the question he decided on Kiau-chau since the place was convenient, and potentialities lay in the hinterland. He had, however, a strong impression that Russia had some claim to, or lien on, the place—and Germany had carefully to consider Russian susceptibilities. For two years he waited, gleaning information which more and more convinced him that the port was a most desirable one, but he was still unable to discover Russia's views, and did not dare to ask a direct question. At last his opportunity came. One day, at a meeting of the Tsung-li-Yamen, he took occasion to say that the interest of Germany demanded a port in China and that it was a pity the Russians had a hold on Kiau-chau, a port which, otherwise, would have suited Germany. Li-Hung-Chang at once rose and protested most indignantly against such an idea, convincing the ambassador that he spoke the truth. Nothing more was said at the time, but the ambassador, having occasion to go to Shanghai, put into Kiau-chau, on the pretext of some injury to the machinery of his vessel, in order to verify his opinion of the place. Soon afterwards the murder of two German missionaries in the Shantung province gave him his chance. At once he sent ships and troops, and occupied the place—and now Germany has exclusive rights over this large and valuable province.

On June 30, I saw the low shores, mud forts, and turbid water of the Peiho disappear ; in the afternoon

of that day we steamed out from Chifu, and in the evening of July 2 reached Shanghai, which looked wonderfully fine and metropolitan, the river banks being now adorned with many imposing buildings. At the Club there was much discontent with the Foreign Office, and people expressed themselves warmly as to the English interest in Africa and the lack of it in China. Next day I met Mr. O—— by appointment and had a long and not too encouraging chat. The growing cotton industry of Shanghai had had a sharp check, the reckless competition of Japanese and Indian mills having reduced prices to an unprofitable point. Better management seemed necessary, especially in the Chinese-owned mills, where "squeeze pidgin" was of course practised.

The Russian and French activity in the Yangtsze basin—which our Government say is our sphere, but where we have no recognised rights—was causing much anxiety, and, as a "fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," Shanghai had now awakened to the fact that North China was in danger and that North China meant much to all China.

I called on the well-known Sheng Taotai, his chief secretary, Mr. Chau, interpreting. He is a curious looking man—very fair for a Chinaman and intelligent looking, but with shifty eyes. No one had a more malodorous reputation for many years—whether as Customs Taotai and Director of the China Merchants' Company, as I remembered him twelve years before, or later as Director of Railways. He was very wealthy then, and during the war with Japan he amassed enormous sums over Government contracts, and carried peculation and unscrupulous-

ness to the furthest point. His greed was said to be the great obstacle to the carrying out of several large railway schemes—such as the Nanking railway. We had some general conversation, in which he stated that where railways were desirable, if they promised to be paying, the Government would prefer to guarantee interest and have the right of purchasing them—but if they looked less valuable, they would prefer to grant concessions outright, but no guarantee of interest. I remarked that the Chinese Government was not now in the position to guarantee any lines whatever, a statement which he didn't like, but could not controvert.

I ended by saying that, whatever might be the disposition or indisposition of the Government towards construction of railways, there was no doubt but that His Excellency had no objection thereto. He may have suspected sarcasm, as his reply seemed hesitating.

I went on board the *Yuan-wo*, one of the big river steamers that run up the Yangtsze, great towering structures with roomy decks and comfortable airy cabins, where capital food and attendance are provided, and we started (July 5) soon after midnight. When I turned out in the cool early morning we were out on the broad, turbid, yellow-red-brown stream, making our way about eight or nine knots against a four-knot current. The low wooded shores were two or three miles apart, but, further up, from one to two miles, and here and there a few low detached pyramidal hills made their appearance.

Junks large and small passed and repassed, and a few river-steamers, but the great ocean vessels had

already come down with their tea cargoes from Hankau.

Among the passengers were a big Dane, going to take the new Customs station at Nanking, just declared a treaty port, and a rough-looking Italian from Lombardy—"*entrepreneur*"—seeking work on the Lu-han Railway at Hankau. The Dane spoke English quite colloquially, the Italian not at all.

We stopped nowhere all day, only slowing down at certain stations to take up and set down Chinese passengers, and between one and two in the morning we moored alongside a hulk at Chin-kiang. As we ascended, the stream narrowed to half a mile, and, owing to the summer floods, the water was almost flush with the banks, which were covered with dense thickets of reeds and intersected with navigable creeks. The river was lively with junks, big and little, hugging the banks to avoid the current, while water buffaloes were wallowing, and cranes, herons, and magpies disporting themselves. We passed many islands; the country contained numerous low hills, detached and irregular, and there were many picturesque villages and farms.

We slowed for a few minutes off Nanking to set down natives and our Dane. The town is not visible—only the long curtain of its battlemented wall, at some distance. Behind are some fair-sized hills, crowned with batteries of heavy guns, the mat sheds over which indicate against the sky-line the position of every gun. Some of the antiquated gun-boats which abound in China were moored off the port, and a very picturesque group of buildings stood near the mouth of the creek.

Soon after three we arrived at Wu-hu, and tied

up to one of a line of hulks used by the different shipping companies.

The afternoon sun beat hot and fierce—the wind had dropped and the oily water was calm and steel-bright, marked here and there by the current swirls.

Across and in front lay the picturesque native town and a few foreign warehouses, offices, etc. The house of the British Consul was marked by its flag-staff, and that of the Commissioner of Customs by its huge walled garden, tree-clad, a mile in circumference, where deer and pheasants wander, for this is a sportsman's paradise. Towering over everything was the Roman Catholic cathedral and quarters, a great oblong, barrack-like structure, and on the bluff at the eastern end stood a picturesque group of mission buildings, balconied and be-shrubbed. In the foreground—with a quaint mass of junks at its foot—rose the tall shaft of a beautiful old ruined pagoda, crowned with growing shrubs. In the clear light this showed lovely form and colour, and beyond was the pale-blue, low mountain range.

Here we took on board a crowd of male and female missionaries with a host of young children and babies, white, wailing, weakly things, all spotted with prickly heat, and their young mothers looking worn and washed out. All these good and well-meaning passengers were on their way to Kuling—a health station or summer resort in the hills behind Kiu-kiang—to which every summer the missionaries flock.

We paused for passengers in the morning (July 7) at An-king or Ngan-king, a most picturesque

walled-town right on the river, with a mountain range behind. A really superb pagoda in perfect preservation had a fine effect standing in the midst of the low storeyed buildings with their curved roofs and white walls, all reflected in the still, broad stream. Fine pagodas mark the city limits or stand out picturesquely on bluffs beside the river. Towards the close of the Tai-ping rebellion this place was the scene of a long and desperate siege, which ended in the rebel garrison and townsfolk being put to the sword by the Imperialists. The town has not yet recovered from the shock ; in fact, the Tai-ping rebellion left a mark on the lower Yangtsze which it will take some generations to efface.

The Captain, an American, who was here at the time, seized the occasion to belittle Gordon, who, according to him, was never more than 30 miles from Shanghai, and it was to two American adventurers, Ward and Burgevine, that the Ever-Victorious army owed its fame. In fact Ward died and Burgevine was dismissed at an early stage of affairs.

Against the thick muddy current, some five knots strong, progress was slow, but the scene was pretty with rice swamps, green hills, and rocky scaurs. At one place where the river narrowed at a turn, the water gathered force, and striking the face of the rock came off at an angle, making deep swirling eddies and backwaters, which suggested that, were engines or steering gear to give way under the extra strain, it would go hard with the ship.

From another point where the mountains come down, shouldering the river, we saw rising on the far

side the "Lone Orphan," a great conical pillar of rock. Precipitous and scarred on one side, it is tree-clad on the other, and there some tiny joss-houses find room to perch.

At last the great mass of Kuling hove in sight, a detached mountain some 5,000 feet high, having many spurs and long, steep, slanting shoulders with deep narrow valleys between. Just before it was the Poyang lake, a vast mountain basin, into which the Yangtsze flows when in flood. It lies to the south of the river, and being navigable for good-sized junks, forms part of a large system of waterways.

Soon after passing this we saw the pagodas of Kiu-kiang, and in another half hour we were moored to one of the line of hulks used instead of quays at all the Yangtsze ports on account of the great rise and fall of the river.

A pretty little tree-clad bund and a few houses marked the small concession. Mr. ——, a Wiltshire man in the Customs, kindly met me and told me that a chair and coolies were waiting, and that I would just have time before dark to do the ten miles to Ta-shan-pei, where the Customs summer bungalow is set some 1,600 feet up on the foot-hills of Kuling.

A small part of the reeking, crowded city had to be crossed before the country was gained. Picturesque as they undoubtedly are, Chinese cities soon cease to attract, and rather create disgust. The path then wound along the edge of outlying country inundated by the rise of the river. Rice was growing on tiny irrigated patches, each slightly higher or lower than its neighbour; the grain was in the ear but still green, and clinging to the leafage

were numbers of large bright green grasshoppers. Here and there were patches of lotus with the roots carefully protected from the sun, and near the thatched cottages were beans, cucumbers, gourds, &c., in rich profusion, fostered by a strong sun and a large water supply. Whether it was because of the general unhealthiness of a rice country I know not, but the stature of the population in these parts was low, and they looked anæmic and ill fed.

Just as darkness came on we arrived at the foot of the steeper ascent, and I was glad to alight and walk up the rough mountain-path or stairway, instead of being carried by the fresh coolies who awaited me. In the dusk I could see, on a jutting promontory high up the gorge, the white dresses of children, and in another quarter of an hour I was at the pleasant little bungalow by which a mountain stream murmured, and found dinner and the warmest of welcomes awaiting me.

I enjoyed three days of quiet family life in this charming spot, set amid the steep hill sides and towering peaks, and rich in vegetation. Though the nights were cool enough to make a covering pleasant, the heat of the day forbade going out, and it was only towards dusk that we had short rambles along the nearer and easier mountain paths. At dawn on July 11 I left, and, as I walked down the hill and across the plain, thought sadly of parents struggling on in ill-health and in a bad climate, and of children growing up without the advantages of suitable education and the companionship of other children.

At mid-day I went on board one of the fast

Butterfield and Swire boats which had a full passenger list, including an ex-officer of a crack Prussian regiment who proved an interesting companion. He seemed a devil-may-care soldier of fortune, and was engaged in drilling Chang-Chih-Chung's small cavalry force at Hankau. He was a soldier and gentleman all over, and, having had a public-school education in England, would have passed anywhere as an Englishman. He gave an amusing account of Chinese military life, the shifts of the mandarins to maintain a sham force for which they draw pay as if it were a real one, and of the aptitude of the troopers. Of these he spoke well, commending, to my surprise, their intelligent reconnaissance and patrol work.

The return journey down the strong current was speedy, and we reached Shanghai early on July 14.

After two days I got away in the *Kobe Maru*, which slipped over to Nagasaki between two typhoons, one of which came up just after we had reached the Inland Sea at Simonosaki.

Early on July 20 we reached Kobe, where I spent three days pleasantly, and then left in the old M.M. *Océanien*, which arrived at Yokohama on the 25th.

A great number of bonzes and heads of the Church were waiting to meet a *very* High Priest who had gone as a boy to Europe to study the arcana of Buddhism in the great libraries of London, Paris and Berlin. He was now returning, a young man, and deputations crowded on board to salute him. His Parisian costume and extreme *insouciance* —not to say conceit—formed a marked contrast

to the shaven heads, flowing robes, and humble respect, of the old priests who had come to greet him as their hereditary High Priest.

I met ——, who had much to say about the continued unsatisfactory state of things in Japan. When I questioned him respecting the army, he was reluctant to express an opinion on the ability of the Generals, but agreed with me that in the Chinese war they showed an almost criminal caution and timidity, and he did not seem to think they possessed real strategic and tactical ability or understood how to lead large bodies of men. But he spoke well of the regimental officers as being careful of their men and earning their confidence.

I dined with ——, and we had a long and pleasant talk on China and Japan. He took a rather gloomy view of the interpretation the Japanese law courts were likely to place upon the new jurisprudence, and thought it would be one-sided. The general opinion of the European community appeared to be that although the state of things consequent on the new Treaties would be quiet—owing to the desire of the higher officials to justify Japan's entrance into the comity of nations—yet that there would be much friction, owing to the anti-foreign attitude of the lower officials. No one appeared to look for much toleration, fair play, or hospitable treatment for the foreigner.

On the 27th I went up early to Tokyo and called on Mr. ——, one of the ablest and most tolerant Japanese. He took occasion with some emphasis to warn me that a very large proportion of his countrymen were anti-foreign—very strongly so—and he gave the impression that he feared they were the

strongest party in the State and might force the hands of the Government.

Dined at the Legation and met Mr. ——, M.P., who had just arrived on his way to China to study the Far Eastern question, on which he posed as an authority in the House. He was of the familiar House of Commons old-stager type, too formed in his opinions really to learn, though his taking the trouble to come out here should count for something. During dinner he had not a little to say of his interviews with Count Ito and other Japanese ministers and leading men. He was full of their intelligent and enlightened views, and was delighted with the way he had been consulted by them and with the impression his views had seemed to make on them. The way in which Japanese and Chinese play up to the newly arrived European of position is delightful. Though, for the time, we all acquiesced, there was a good deal of silent amusement. After dinner, when we got to the verandah and cigars, the conversation became very interesting, for —— came out of his shell. He is a really able man, with a particularly refined manner, in which lurks a good deal of irony and quick readiness to put awkward questions in a quiet way, or to fix up anyone dealing overmuch in generalities. Mr. ——, M.P., was a good deal surprised and shaken; for though he had espoused the great cause in China and had been one of the few who had worried the Government in the House, he was far from possessing a real knowledge and appreciation of the situation.

Next day I got on board the *Empress of Japan* at Yokohama, and, after a wonderfully fine passage

of twelve days, arrived at Vancouver early on August 7.

On board I discovered an old friend going home from Manila, suffering from a severe form of "sprue," that common and distressing Eastern complaint. He mended wonderfully towards the end. In fact, all of us revelled in the cool air of the Pacific, after the heat of China.

We quarantined for an afternoon at an island near Victoria, and there got rid of our Chinese passengers, who were stripped and turned into a large barn, where they were douched with weak carbolic acid and water from a hose.

During the operation I had a glorious walk by delightful coves and over rocky knolls and oak and pine-clad slopes, and past pleasant timber-built farmsteads and ripening crops—all with an air of western civilisation.

On August 9, we started on our eastward journey by the new accelerated service, and, after four days, reached Montreal "on time"—3,000 miles in 100 hours. After fifty minutes we left in the very fast night train for New York, and when day dawned we admired the beautiful scenery of the banks of the noble Hudson. Arriving about 9 at New York, we betook ourselves to the huge caravanserai of the famous "Waldorf," a town in itself, comfortable, dear, and well-managed, but altogether too vast for real comfort.

Next morning, at Hoboken, we went on board the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* which, punctually at ten, was taken out into the stream, and soon after noon passed Sandy Hook. We had smooth seas all the way over, and she maintained an average

speed of 22½ knots, so that we reached Cherbourg in rather less than six days.

There the French Channel fleet was lying—an incongruous collection of monstrosities.

Outside the breakwater was a torpedo-boat destroyer, which, as we were leaving, commenced to stoke up, so that by the time we were outside and under speed her fires were burning bright. Then, setting out after us, she overhauled us in fine style till almost on our starboard quarter, when she turned and, dipping her tricolour, passed under our stern at great speed in quite a smother of froth and spray. It was a pretty and stirring sight.

As we passed the Needles old England looked very beautiful in the evening light, though, owing to the dry summer, very brown.

The ship seemed full of suppressed excitement as we glided up Southampton Water in the gloaming and when we landed, we thought :

"East, West, Hame's best."

CHAPTER VII.

TO THE YANGTSZE—ICHANG.

AFTER spending five weeks in England I once more set out on my travels, taking the westward route to reach the East. On the evening of September 25, along with Matheson and Grant, I went on board the *Werra*, off Cowes, and on the morning of October 5, we were moored at Hoboken. We "did" the wonders of the Waldorf and the Brooklyn Bridge, admired the cable and electric train systems, and saw the superb triumphal arch, with its fine sculpture, on Fifth Avenue, through which the Dewey procession had passed the previous Saturday. "A poem in plaster," one of the papers justly called it. The Americans seemed to have gone crazy over Dewey and Manila Bay, bracketing him and his performances with Nelson and Trafalgar.

Next morning we reached Montreal; then a day of steaming took us through the settled country, and along the beautiful shores of Lake Superior; another day we hastened over the great prairies, another, through the Rockies in a snowstorm, and then one lovely morning we passed down the Valley of the Frazer—now pretty familiar to me—

and reached Vancouver, where the *Empress of India* was waiting for the mails. This was on the 10th of October, just two months to a day since I had landed here homeward-bound from China.

In our voyage across the Pacific we had cold, strong head-winds, rain, and mist, except for one day off the Aleutians, which we approached more closely than I had ever done before. For a whole day we passed long, barren, mountainous islands, with snow and ice-clad peaks, the hill-sides and ravines running right down to the sea, or terminating in precipices. They presented no sign of life or vegetation anywhere.

On our first Sunday morning we witnessed an impressive scene. An old lady had died, and now preparations were being made for her funeral. A grating, covered with the dear old flag, was laid in the after-waist by an open port, and the blue ensign on the stern flagstaff was half-masted. Then the engines were slowed down, and the Captain and officers and a clergyman in his canonicals came along; sailors brought the flag-shrouded body on a stretcher, and laid it on the grating, and the service began, the passengers, bareheaded, looking down from the flying-deck. Owing to the noise of the tumbling surges we could scarcely hear the few short prayers and the splash of the body. As the benediction was spoken the engine-room bells sounded, and in ten minutes there was not a sign of what had passed.

On board was the great Chinese Reformer, Kang-yu-weh, who had nearly lost his life the year before in the Palace Revolution. He had heard that the Empress was repenting of her ways, and he was

now going to Japan, so as to be at hand against the arrival of the new era in China. Some young American ladies who practised palmistry, sought to tell his fortune. He first asked to be assured that it was not very black magic, and then submitted, but soon got very uneasy, and suddenly fled.

Before dawn on October 23 we anchored off the quarantine station in Yeddo Bay, and as soon as the fussy little officials had mustered all the different branches of the crew and passengers and gone through the usual tomfooleries, we were allowed to proceed.

On the 25th, we reached Kobe, where we were again examined for pratique with even more than the usual fuss. It was ridiculous to see anæmic-looking Chinamen stripped on the deck and stethoscoped for lung trouble; but after two hours of this we were allowed to go on and anchor in the bay, which looked very beautiful, great clouds setting off the mountains behind the nestling houses of Kobe and Hiogo.

We touched at Nagasaki on the 27th, and at daybreak on the 28th we steamed up to the bar at Wusung over the yellow Yangtsze waters. Abreast with us on the port hand the *Fame*, and close astern the *Whiting*, torpedo-boat destroyers, convoyed us up to Wu-sung and dropped their mud-hooks alongside. The admiral, on learning that Kang-yu-weh was on board had sent these boats to prevent any search of the vessel by the Chinese authorities. The Captain said he was not on board, having been quietly left at Kobe. The Japs, wishing to be on the best possible terms with the Chinese Government, had refused to let him land at Yoko-

hama, but had permitted him to do so at Kobe on the understanding that he would soon depart.

After the *Empress*, however, had arrived at Hong Kong it was telegraphed to Shanghai that Kang-yu-weh had landed from her there, but this may have been untrue.

We got up to Shanghai by 10 a.m., and I was delighted to find that rooms had been kept for us at the Astor House, which was quite full. Next morning we went to the Consulate and saw Mr. B——, who, having accompanied the Blackburn mission up the West River to Yunnan and Szechwan, was able to give us many useful hints.

Sheng Taotai being at Peking and not expected back for some weeks, I was in doubt whether to go north and see that slippery gentleman, or, for the time to ignore the fact of his being Director of Railways south of the Yangtsze. The latter course might give rise to jealousy and opposition on his part and there was some risk of my being referred to him by the provincial authorities whom we might see on our journey. But on the other hand, I was unwilling to waste time by a journey north, and I feared that to disclose my views to Sheng would only ensure their being made known to his Belgian and French advisers. So I decided to go up the Yangtsze at once and applied for passports to cover the provinces of Hupeh, Szechwan, Yunnan, Kweichau, Hunan, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung.

Mr. B—— promised to try and find a suitable interpreter for us, and Mr. W——, who had recently come from Hankau and was now acting Consul-General, promised us a letter to the famous Viceroy

Chang-chi-Tung, the great antagonist of Li-Hung-Chang. Chang-chi-Tung had the reputation of being the most honest and patriotic official in China, and though anti-foreign, was not averse to using foreigners and foreign methods for the development of China. W—— thought that if we could enlist his sympathies he would recommend us to the allied viceroys and that he would have influence at Peking. Just now he was pro-Japanese in his leanings; a year before he had been pro-British, but had taken fright at the time of the Palace revolution lest he should be considered as too advanced, and so share the fate of the other reformers

The movements of the Japanese were discuessd with much interest. A merchant who controlled most of the coal trade, told me that from Shanghai to Singapore the Japs were buying up every ton of Welsh coal they could lay their hands on. From another man, one who had a Jap wife, I learnt that for some time the Japs had had vessels on Lake Biwa, rigged out in imitation of transports, and that they were continually exercising their garrison in the neighbourhood in embarking and disembarking, allowing a certain time, and causing the movement to be done with all the necessary supplies as if in real war.

Leaving my two companions I set out for Hankau by the *Tatung* on November 5, and next day about noon reached Nanking, an interesting place with high walls stretching for miles round the vast area of the city. Since the Taiping rebellion, so much had gone to ruin that although it had still a population of about three-quarters of a million, a great

part of the city formed a pheasant cover, where the Europeans went for their sport. Great masses of wild duck, teal, and geese were to be seen on the water, on mud-banks, or in flight, towards nightfall. At sunset there were tens of thousands of crows; the air was black with them, wheeling about in their usual fashion and then settling on the reeds which border the Yangtsze. These reeds grow to a height of 20 feet, and about this season are cut and stored by the peasantry. Herons were plentiful and here and there among graves, which they like to haunt, might be seen pheasants. Along the river banks, set in little cuttings in the reeds, were thousands of drop nets common in China—wide, flat, fine-meshed — stretched by two cross-spars and hung from a pole moving on a pivot. Every few minutes the attendant depresses the lever, up comes the net, the fish are scooped out with a small long-handled net and dropped into a big wicker jar, the lower part of which rests in the river. Men in boats also fish with nets in the current. I saw a number of the flesh-coloured porpoises which I believe are common in the Yangtsze.

At Kiu-Kiang, which I reached on November 8, the weather was rainy, but one afternoon I had a 4½-mile walk round the Chinese city, on the wall, a decayed and overgrown structure, running irregularly on the land side but straight on the city's river front. As in many other towns in the Yangtsze valley and elsewhere, only a small part of the ground enclosed is occupied, the rest being in cultivation or covered with brush. Framed in the embrasures of the battlements, the views from the wall, over the low ground and foot-hills towards the

bold masses of the Ku-ling mountains, were very fine.

Matheson and Grant rejoined me on the 13th, and setting out before noon that day we reached Hankau at daylight on the 14th, and, having tied up alongside the China Merchants' Wharf in the native city, just above the Bund, we found our way to the Grand Hotel, a French concern in the French concession.

The English Bund here is the finest in China, after that at Shanghai—fine buildings, parted from the river by a broad road and by still broader grass plots, planted with young trees.

After breakfast we interviewed the Consul, who in reply to our request to see the Viceroy of the two Hu provinces, the famous Chang-chi-Tung, undertook to apply on our behalf for an audience, though he assured us it would probably be refused.

After tiffin we walked past the racecourse and on to the terminus of the Lu-han Railway. About 100 miles of earthworks were said to be complete, and rails (85lb.) rolled at the Han-Yang works were being accumulated for plate-laying. Nothing was to be seen except a go-down, and the beginning of a little 24-inch line running on the earthworks. The terminus is close to the river, and the line follows it for some distance. As this shore is being rapidly eaten away by the current, there will soon be wanted some extensive works to protect the line embankments.

We walked back along the river, and, on coming up to the road, found ourselves in the throng of folks returning from the races. A Russian troika (a sort of low victoria), drawn by three black ponies

with long manes, was a droll spectacle. The centre horse was under a big decorated bow, while the two flank animals, bitted up, went prancing, curvetting, and caracoling along sideways, taking almost the whole width of the road, to an accompaniment of numerous jangling bells. On the steps stood a tall Russian soldier, with flat cap and yellow band and a dirty drab uniform ; inside the carriage stood two Russians, the driver holding a rein in each hand. It was a regular circus performance, but they seemed very well satisfied with it.

Next day we took a sampan, and passing the debouchure of the Han river, one of the most important navigable affluents of the Yangtsze, arrived at the city of Han-Yang, and there visited the iron and steel works, specially interesting to me, as we had inspected, for the Chinese Legation, all the plant and material for buildings when they they were sent out, some eight or ten years before.

When the matter was first put into our hands we strongly advised the Chinese to suspend a decision as to the place of operations until they had first sent to England large samples of the available ore and coal, so that it might be seen whether they were suitable. But they would not have it so, and proceeded to bund a large plot of ground at the junction of the Han with the Yangtsze on very unsuitable foundations, at a cost of about £500,000, I understand—no small initial expense. To this place the iron ore has to be brought in barges from a point about 30 miles down the river, to which it is conveyed by a small railway from the mines. The ore is of good quality, but the coal, which comes from mines on the border of Kwang-si and Hunan

via the Tung-ting lake, is very poor for coking and highly sulphurous and phosphoric, so that the steel resulting is extremely brittle and variable. The cost, too, is high, about 13 taels per ton. Rather better coke is imported from the Kai-ping mines in North China at a cost of 17 taels per ton, which is prohibitive.

Naturally the works are unremunerative, and have not been improved by numerous changes in the management. English, Americans, and Germans, rapidly succeeded one another, and now Belgians were in great force, the only other foreigner being an English sea-captain, who had charge of all the transport arrangements and landing of coal and ore, etc.

These works were a heavy burden on the Viceroy, but when Sheng Taotai was impeached after the Japanese war by the Board of Censors for having made a fortune by selling enormous quantities of useless rifles and spoilt ammunition to his Government, he saved his head, by buying off the three Viceroys who were appointed to try him ; and the price paid to Chang-chi-Tung, one of the three, was the relieving him of the Han-Yang works, which now drain Sheng's pockets.

Only one of the two blast-furnaces has ever been put into blast, and it turns out about 160 tons of pig-iron per day. It was in blast at the time of our visit, and samples showed a very dark-grey metal, very irregular in composition, and apparently very graphitic. We could not learn much, however, Mr. W——, our guide, not being an expert. The other furnace could not be used, even if desired, as the foundation had given away.

The bar and plate and rail mills, and also the Siemens regenerators and Bessemer converters, were under a noble range of fine iron roofs which did credit to the Société Cockerill.

The rail mills, of now antiquated type, actually turned out not more than 100 to 150 tons per day, and the loss must be great from these alone.

The whole concern, conceived in ignorance, and carried on in stupidity, was a signal instance of how things are conducted in China.

Early on the 16th, I had a visit from the consul, who informed us that the Viceroy would receive us at ten o'clock, and he promised to have a steam-launch ready to take us across to Wu-chang, the capital of the Province. We had official cards prepared, and the Consul lent us official chairs, one green, the higher rank colour used by Consuls, and two blue. As we neared the other shore two large official boats, with pretty striped blue and white sails, crossed our bows. One of them contained the Customs or Hai-kwan Taotai, who, in virtue of his connection with foreigners, has generally to be present at interviews with the Viceroy. On landing we were met by red-coated soldiers sent to convoy us, and, getting into our chairs, we arrived in ten minutes at the Yamen. At one of the outer gates some delay took place, the keepers of this and of an inner gate shouting at one another and rattling the bars and chains. Finally the point was decided against us, and, instead of passing through the central gate, we had to go through a side passage and up a long, ill-kept courtyard, full of staring hangers-on. At the further end we dismounted, and went into an anteroom with open doors, where two official

interpreters awaited us. Here we were questioned as to who we were, what were our intentions, and so forth. During this delay a man named Liang, who said he was born at Penang, and was cousin to the wealthy Chinese who had lent his house to the Duke of Edinburgh when he visited Penang, asked if I related to the Mr. Birch who, he said, was our Governor there. Perhaps he noticed the family resemblance. This man, who, I suspect, was a British subject, born under our flag, was educated at Harvard, and spoke English fluently, but was said to be very anti-foreign, though he showed no sign of that to us. The Customs Taotai, a short, high-coloured Chinese, in full and gaudy official robes, was also present, but found himself rather out of the conversation, and presently went to join some *confrères* in the room adjoining. Soon after, we were ushered into a large room and were received by a very insignificant, shabbily dressed, old man, whom at first I did not take to be the Viceroy. After salutations, we all sat down at a large round table, covered with Chinese cakes, sweets and fruits, and champagne and tea were served. The old gentleman looked very frail and ill, and was suffering from a bad cough and cold, repeatedly expectorating and wiping his nose and mouth on pieces of soft yellow paper which lay on the table. His pipe-bearer and the usual Yamen hangers-on were present. He was very smiling and gracious during the interview, but would not accede to our request for a friendly introduction to the Viceroys of the provinces we were to travel through. In vain we said that his enterprise and capacity were so widely known throughout China that a word from him

would be most useful. "We had our passports," he said, "and these would assure us all protection. For the rest, the affairs of other provinces were not his affairs but those of their Viceroys." Although we returned several times to the attack—knowing that iteration tells with the Chinese—he was not to be drawn. But he said that he would be glad to see us on our way back and, to hear our further plans. When asked if the Viceroy of Szechwan was favourable to enterprise, his answer was undecided. Questioned whether he did not think that the more China was opened up, the better it would be for its people and Government, he drily replied that a good many concessions had already been granted. I went so far as to say outright that there was danger of absorption of China by the great Northern Power at no distant time, and that to create interests of other nations in China was the surest way of opposing barriers to Russia. But to this he was absolutely silent and looked grave, probably because it was too delicate or unpleasant a matter for public discussion with a foreigner. Seeing that we were strangers, sprung at a moment's notice on him from he knew not where, with no particular credentials or even introduction to him, I suppose we ought really to have wondered less at a refusal to assist us than at his granting an interview. At all events we "broke the ice," as Matheson said, and possibly we might find that he had privately advised the other Viceroys of our advent. On leaving, he came with us to the gate of the first or inner courtyard, and then we parted.

The afternoon was spent in packing, making our adieux, and getting money from the Bank. I met

the German Count with whom I had travelled down the Yangtsze in July. He had recently lost his appointment as Cavalry Instructor to the Viceroy, his place and that of other Germans having been taken by Japs at much lower rates. The Jap was becoming strong in Hankau. The Germans also

NATURAL ARCH, TIGER'S TOOTH GORGE.

were progressing in trade matters, most of the export of hides, hair, and other things known as "the muck and truck trade," being in their hands. There was a German steamer on the river, and one or two others especially built for navigation to Chung-king, were soon to come out. The tea trade was of course in the hands of the Russians, numerous

here. A strong anti-British feeling was very marked here, as elsewhere, amongst all other foreigners—and was shown by none more than by our good German friends. Although the British had opened out the Yangtsze basin, made its trade possible and free to all, and obtained most of the concessions on which foreigners lived, enjoying the same advantages as ourselves, they hated us all the more for so doing. When the news came of the reverse we sustained in Natal, the Germans living on the English concession at Hankau, under the protection of the English flag, met together to drink "success to the Boers!"

In saying good-bye to the Consul I told him of our visit to the Viceroy, which he volunteered to follow up.

At 6.30 we started in the comfortable little *Shasi*, a Butterfield and Swire boat, and next day, at noon, we turned up the creek leading to Yo-chau, at the mouth of which is a Customs station.

That day and the next, the 10th, were warm, bright, and pleasant, and about noon on the 17th, (Sunday) we reached Ichang. The country so far had been level, but now we came to the gorge below Ichang, known as that of the Tiger's Tooth. A splendid natural arch spans a ravine close to the entrance. Bold cliffs fall plumb to the water and sharply serrated ridges stand back from it; some distance off, separate from the mountain and crowned by a monastery, rises a curious cleft rock-turret resembling that of a Norman castle.

Lying along the river and backed by the mountain ranges which mark the entrance to the great gorges of the Upper Yangtsze, Ichang stands picturesquely

at the present limit of steam navigation, and above it river traffic is slow, costly and dangerous.

Mr. Wong, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank

HILLS BELOW ICHANG.

agent, a Chinaman educated in the States, living in a foreign house in foreign style and speaking English well, at once undertook to charter a junk or

KWATZU AT CUSTOMS JETTY, ICHANG.

"kwat-zu" for us, and that evening one dropped down to the Customs jetty for inspection. It was a good-sized craft, with a flat deck (raiseable boards) forward; behind the mast a long deck-house,

divided into three compartments, each roughly about 7 or 8 feet square ; behind that again an open space for servants, with the tiller projecting up through it, and a raised bench for the steersman, which would enable him to see over the top of the deckhouse. Still further back was a high raised cabin for the skipper and his wife. This vessel we chartered next day for the sum of 210 taels (about £32) which covered everything—extra trackers at the rapids, etc.—145 taels being paid down, 20 more on arriving at Kwei-chau-fu, 15 at Wan-hsien and the remaining 30 at Chung-king. She carried a crew of seven, and fifteen trackers, for a trip of about four or five weeks.

We called at the Consulate and requested the Consul to apply to the Chinese General for a "hung-chwen," or red-boat, with a guard of soldiers to accompany us to the confines of the Province, where we should meet one from the Szechwan authorities. Such boats are useful as showing that you are under official protection, and enable you at rapids to take precedence of all the junks waiting their turn to ascend. They can be used also in going ashore, and for any odd purposes.

The Acting Commissioner kindly offered to lend us any useful articles of outfit which they had in the Customs. He amused us by repeating Mr. W——'s account of how he came down the rapids in Mr. Little's steam launch, which had been up at Chung-king ever since Little's ascent in it, some years before.

The head boy at the Consulate undertook to find us a cook and a boy, premising that such articles

were neither plentiful nor good at Ichang, and next day there came to us Messrs. Wong and Wang, whom we engaged at monthly salaries respectively of 12 and 16 taels, they to provide themselves with food. With the interpreter, Mr. Hsia-u-fang —engaged at Shanghai at 100 taels per month and travelling expenses—and his body-servant, also a Wong, our party numbered seven. There being no such thing as a hotel at Ichang or indeed anywhere in the Yangtsze valley, save at Hankau, Capt. Austin kindly allowed us to stay on board the *Shasi*, at the rate of three dollars per day per head for messing—and the mess was so good, that we threatened to annex the cook.

After tiffin on the 20th, the *Kwat-zu* came alongside, and our numerous cases of stores and instruments and camp outfits were transferred to her and stowed in the hold under our cabins.

On the morning of the 22nd, I was re-vaccinated, as the others had been at Shanghai, small-pox being always present in China.

Two flags were made for us by the Chinese tailor, a most complacent Cantonese, amusingly fluent in pidgin-English. One was a red ensign to fly at the masthead—it being desirable that the English flag should be seen on the Upper Yangtsze—the other a red flag with black characters, "Ta-ying-Pir-chih"—which being translated means "the Great-British subject Birch." Pir-chih, the name bestowed on me by the Viceroy Li-Hung-Chang when I first came to China, means "superior wisdom." It is very important among the Chinese that the names of persons should be significant of good. When the red ensign was given to the

Captain to hoist he first set it with the jack upside down, and when that was corrected he half-masted it—*absit omen !*

It was dusk when we hoisted sail and commenced our voyage, going less than a mile up-stream and mooring to a tier of junks beside the native city. Matheson brought off the news just received by wire that the Boers had attacked Ladysmith and had been repulsed with heavy loss. We left 10 dollars with the Consul that he might telegraph the latest intelligence to us in about ten days, when we expected to have reached Kwei-chau-fu.

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CHAPTER VIII.

ICHANG TO THE WU-SHAN GORGE.

A FIRST night under such conditions is apt to be more or less of a "*nuit blanche*," and, despite three blankets and a Wolseley sleeping-bag, I was the reverse of warm. Our bark was a perfect temple of the winds; the windows did not fit, the bulkhead shutting us off from the low forward deck was simply composed of planks placed vertically in grooves, with chinks half-an-inch wide between; and the doors were of the rudest, opening or falling down of themselves. We hung a lovely Turkey-red cotton curtain across the bulkhead, which somewhat mitigated the draughts and brightened the room in the evening when our cheerful petroleum lamp was lit. A large and a small Chinese table and three hard square stools comprised the whole furniture of the three compartments, which were painted Indian red, with some fanciful devices on the main bulkhead. The floor was composed of varnished, ill-fitting planks, which sprang under our feet and had gaping chinks between. The planks lifted up and gave access to the shallow hold, into which Grant and Matheson were always diving for stores.

The forward compartment formed our sitting, eating, and washing room by day, and my sleeping room by night; the middle one was devoted to Grant and Matheson, and the room aft to Mr. Hsia and his boys. Our boy and the cook also slept there but pursued their daily occupations in the space between that room and the Captain's cabin. At night some ridge-poles were run out over the forward deck and curved mats laid over them; under this shelter the crew and trackers lay packed like herring, and did not seem to mind the cold from the open sides.

Our red-boat with its guard of soldiers lay alongside us at night, with a striped blue and white awning over the lowered furled sail, covering in the after part of the boat.

It was ten on the morning of November 23, when our real start was made, crackers being let off, a gong beaten, and the gunboat firing three bombs. After tiffin we entered the Ichang gorge, and about three o'clock we landed and had a charmingly pretty walk among the hills and ravines—very steep ones—which bordered the river. We took the guns, but saw absolutely nothing to shoot. Wherever possible the difficult hill-sides were terraced, tiny strips of a few yards square composing the patches. We came across many small thatched farm cottages, the people in which, or in the fields, took little notice of us. Between the cultivated strips the hill-sides were well covered with brushwood and small timber, palms and bananas occasionally testifying to the mildness of the climate, as did also the patches of young beans and vetches, now about six inches high. Numerous small trees bore white

berries, and the leaf, which resembled that of the poplar, was of a lovely rich scarlet. Ferns were very plentiful and varied, including several of our commoner greenhouse kinds. The views of the long deep gorge, with its numerous cliff faces, were superb, with the higher ranges behind, and the warm autumn browns and reds on the foliage.

FISHING BOAT, ICHANG GORGE.

When we had breathed ourselves sufficiently we descended the steep hill to the river; but the bank was of the roughest, the inclination of the rock ledges being down and across stream, so that we were mounting up to drop down every few yards, and it was half-past-six when we rejoined the red-boat as she was mooring alongside at Ping-shan-pa. The distance travelled that day was 30 li (10 miles).

In the gorge the temperature was from 10° to

15° below that of Ichang, and we made our beds very carefully. Our bedsteads were of the "compactum" type—light iron frames folding into very small space, a canvas bottom with short poles fitting together in sockets. Over these were our Wolseley valise beds, made of brown canvas with a large pocket at one end to contain a small Willesden canvas pillow and clothes. The upper part of the valise folded over, completely covering us and our bed-clothes, and fastened at the side with small straps and buckles. On the valise I laid two small blankets, each doubled, and a warm light Jaeger blanket and a thick rug, both doubled; over these the upper part of the valise folded, and over my feet I laid a thick overcoat. I wore, under my thickest pyjama suit, a thin vest and drawers. With these precautions I was comfortably warm all night.

We started about 6.30 in the morning, but half-a-mile higher up had to tie up behind the corner of a jutting cliff, which came sheer to the water and round which a strong swirling current was running —the river narrowing here to a width of 240 yards, as ascertained by Grant and Matheson. The trackers in their thin cotton rags huddled together for warmth behind the rock, and it was towards mid-day before we could get on.

We came out of the gorge just below the little town of Nan-to, where we landed with the guns in the hope of finding some pheasants, having heard that they were numerous, but the hill slopes were much too steep to walk on comfortably. The birds we were told, lie chiefly in a long coarse grass, which at this season is provided with sharp, pointed seeds $\frac{3}{8}$-inch long, with hooks at the end, which readily

penetrate woollen clothes and scarify the skin. We saw no game, but magnificent scenery—a row of great jagged mountain tops overlooking the gorge, and the still bigger ranges of the next gorge barring the western skies.

Below us the air resounded with the harsh chorus of the trackers on the upward-bound junks and of

WORKING THE SIDE YULOS OF LARGE JUNK.

the oarsmen on those going down. Junks go down with their masts un-stepped and with great numbers of trackers on board, working the long "yulos" or sculling sweeps, as well as the side oars, which are mere narrow pieces of wood worked on a crutch by men standing and looking forward, a mere dip in the water and out again. Besides the rudder the junks have a long bow sweep, a small tree, laid in the longitudinal axis of the boat, with which the

bow can be swung right off. The hull of the boat is almost oblong, with a flat bottom and a slight tumble-home, so that these junks handle very easily. The ascending boat is weighted forward to make it less easy for the current to turn her, but if she does take a sheer, then she is much less easily controlled.

The valley gradually opened out, and the river channel became studded with rocks beside the wide bed, now dry. Among the low foot-hills were pretty little villages among clumps of bamboo. The making of plaited tracking ropes out of the skin of the bamboo is a large industry hereabouts, and wonderfully tough these ropes are. In the bamboos near the village were pretty grey doves with warm red-brown breasts, of which Grant shot a couple. The children were much excited and interested in the shooting, and delighted with the empty cases and with empty "sparklet" shells.

The red-boat with our soldiers was waiting to take us on to the junk, which had preceded us and had anchored at the pretty village of Hwang-ling-miao, lying along a wooded ridge running parallel with and down to the river. Distance 60 li.

The temperature that night was fully 10° over that in the gorge the night before, but the air off the water is always more penetrating and keen than on land, making the waking cup of tea very comforting.

On the morning of the 25th we came up to the first rapids, with a very rocky shore and projecting boulders, over which the trackers had to clamber. Very long hawsers, 200 to 300 yards, are used, and the men are directed by signals from the boat or

from a rocky eminence. One or two men are placed intermediately to clear the line off the rocks, while the main gang fasten themselves to the end by short hand lines, each of which can be rapidly attached to or detached from the line by means of a round iron or wood toggle and loop, the other

TRACKERS GETTING A LINE ROUND A BIGHT.

end being attached to a broad piece of webbing which passes over one shoulder and under the other. The boat end of the line is fastened to a sort of horizontal bollard which traverses the deck at the bow, or to the one by the mast, and, attached to the tow-line by a large toggle, is another rope, the end of which is led over the top of the mast to the tiller, so that the steersman by pulling it can lift

the tow-line clear of the water and over the masts of small junks and sampans taking an inside course. This rope can be slackened away so as to prevent too great a strain on the mast, which, as usual in China, is not stayed, but very firmly stepped into the bottom of the boat and again strengthened at the deck level by a strong mast partner. When going up a very strong rapid, however, a straight pull is taken direct from the forward bollard, or from the mast partner.

We went ashore directly after breakfast and watched operations, which were of course slow, the junks taking it in turns to surmount each rapid, or pass projecting corners of rock, the tracking lines being run out in advance across the bights between. A wooden drum is beaten on board at times to stimulate exertions as the boat gains slowly inch by inch. With the large gangs belonging to big junks a half or wholly naked man runs frantically to and fro beside the men, or dances in front of them, shouting all the time, or he whacks their backs with a long cane more for sound than injury. The men strain forward, stooping almost to the ground and singing a sort of "chanty" the while. On board every man is at his place, cool and obedient to the Captain's orders. At every projecting rock point we observed a fisherman with a long-handled light net, shaped very like a "lacrosse" stick, with which he swept the current downwards with a slow stroke and caught little fish. Bigger ones from one to seven pounds were also taken—a sort of carp.

We came on board for tiffin after passing a rather larger bay with an island in it, to which the trackers had to be conveyed in order to haul the boats round

the rock point and rapid below. Spread out on the adjacent shore to dry was the cargo of cotton

JUNK BEING HAULED UP RAPID.

of a wrecked junk which was lying alongside the island, and just before we tied up for the night we

FISHERMAN AT ROCK POINT.

passed another which also had come to grief. Immediately after tiffin we negotiated the worst

rapid we had yet seen; but there were no great waves, only rushing water and great swirls and uptakes from large submerged rocks. On the other side of the river, here fine and wide, the downward bound junks sped on the current at 8 or 10 knots per hour. So far the rapids were rather disappointing, though difficult and even dangerous enough, and always demanding the greatest care and exertion. Each particular rapid, however, varies in its force and danger according to the height of the river, some being comparatively easy when it is low, and difficult when it is high, and *vice versâ*.

After passing this rapid we went ashore, and walked among the pretty hills and ravines bordering the wide sand and boulder-strewn bed of the river. There was plenty of colour in the autumn tints, and beauty of form in the numerous bamboo clumps in which the little, brown, thatched cottages were set, with their gardens of sweet potato and beans, and groves of orange and pummelow trees, the big golden globes of which were still hanging. Skimpy firs adorned the steep-sided low hills, and here and there were palmetto palms and a kind of araucaria, not quite so stiff as our monkey-puzzles at home. We saw a few doves, a brace of ducks, some water-snipe, white wagtails, magpies, white-throated crows, sparrows, and a few curious birds with exceedingly long tails, too far off to distinguish well. Grant put up a small hare in the boulders and short turf of the river bed. We tied up on the left bank, to which our red-boat conveyed us at dusk, below a place called Hai-yen-tzu. Distance about 60 li, but this does not represent 20 miles—probably not half of that, although three ordinary li go to the mile

—as, when the road is difficult, the li becomes short and rather a measure of time than of distance.

After breakfast, November 26, we landed on the left bank under the picturesque village below which we had anchored. The view was magnificent. Behind us was the river making its way to the ranges of the Ichang gorge, in front the cliff faces dropping

PATH IN PADDY FIELDS.

plumb into the water, and, towering above them, huge mountain masses, so steep and high that they shut out half the sky; on their summits powdery snow lay in places and a cool breeze was beginning to blow up-river, driving vaporous mists over the ravines and crests. I estimated the height at from 5,000 to 6,000 feet but Matheson put it at half this and Grant midway between. The mountains, rising sheer before us, no doubt looked higher than

more sloping hills would have done, but I think I was not much out.

The big camera was brought up to do justice to the scene, but the focussing screen of ground glass was broken, a piece of very bad luck, especially as I had omitted to bring a spare one.

Progress by foot being impossible we took to the red-boat and, with a fresh breeze behind, sailed merrily up, through the comparatively deep and placid waters of the Hsin-tan gorge, much enjoying the superb views which on all sides kept opening out. From time to time the gorge rang with the shouts and chants of the big down-dropping junks with their huge crews of trackers going to Ichang for employment on the upward voyage.

The strata varied considerably; one day we traversed sedimentary limestone with trap dykes out-cropping; next day the formation was metamorphic; and the third day it was largely basaltic. There was scarcely a sign of bird life, save the usual big turkey-buzzard sailing majestically over the heights. Very few cottages were visible, and those we saw looked most dangerously placed on steep slopes at the foot of precipices, down which rocks must constantly fall.

We came up to our ship just at the foot of the first of the Hsin-tan rapids, below the long and charmingly situated village of that name.

Having seen the lower rapid surmounted, a large number of extra trackers, mostly small boys, lending a hand, we went on board and had our lunch as we went up the next. In fact there was a succession of rapids all the way. In the middle of one the skipper hauled in-shore, took his trackers

on board, and then, with the aid of the strong breeze, sailed across the stream, the junk tumbling about a little in the strong chow-chow water. It was prettily done, and we came into a strong back-water on the other side just as we seemed to be rushing on the rocks. The rapids are not turbulent broken water and waves, but long rapid glides, with swirling whirlpools and eddies. So far we saw nothing difficult of navigation for a powerful

ICHANG GORGE, RED-BOAT AND JUNK PASSING.

steamer of light draft, but possibly at lower water the difficulty may be greater.

Soon after 4 p.m. we went ashore on the left bank and walked along pretty paths on the mountain side till we came abreast of Kwei, where a great uptilted reef runs across the river, which has cut itself a passage through it. Above it are good bays on either side. We crossed in the red-boat to the opposite shore, where from the top of the rocks we watched our bark essay the channel. In mid-stream she struck an up-swirl and canted over so that we thought the mast and sail had come down,

missed the backwater and was carried down stream, while a big cargo junk just behind came sailing through in stately fashion.

Our distance from Ichang was here 232 li, but in miles only about 40, so that we had averaged only about 10 miles per day.

Next morning (November 27) Matheson and Grant after breakfast took some angles to determine the height of the hill over Kwei, a prettily situated little walled town on the left bank, where a small stream enters the Yangtsze. The fortifications were certainly not designed for days of artillery, for they are commanded by neighbouring heights and by the upper part of the hill slope on which they stretch from the river.

I walked ahead along or above the tracking path, which followed the jutting shoulders of the hill slopes. These run down almost at right angles to the Yangtsze, and, near the river or at its bed on the north bank, throw up ridges of harder rock which run slantwise into the river. The hills, about 1,500 to 2,000 feet high, form rather a valley than a gorge, and their slopes lie very evenly at an angle of about 45° to 50°. Steep as is the slope, high up on it are large patches of cultivated ground, unterraced, containing some winter cereal and a kind of pulse. A little below Yeh-tan we passed several small coal workings, tiny adits on the sides of the hills, which supplied material for a local industry, the manufacture of briquettes (coal and mud), largely used for cooking on junks, several of which we saw taking in cargoes of them. The natural vegetation was rather sparse, chiefly coarse grass and shrubs, one of a bright red colour. Many small yellow

PAGODA AND TOWN OF HSIN-TAN.

chrysanthemums and michaelmas daisies were common all the way from Ichang.

It was a rough day for the trackers, the current being strong, and despite a fair light wind it took them till two o'clock to get up to the foot of the celebrated Yeh-tan rapid. Their path lay over

BRIQUETTE FACTORY.

rough stone and shingle, or along ledges high up on the cliffs, or over steps 10 or 12 inches wide roughly hewn in the face of the hill. The plaited bamboo tracking line with its rough edges often caught on the rocks, and two or three men were constantly employed in clearing it. Bare-footed, they had to climb almost vertical slopes, and sometimes to wade or swim out in the river.

Below the Yeh-tan rapid the stream was very swift for a mile or two, the angle of the water-glide being quite perceptible. This rapid, notorious for its danger, was now at its best. A month before, when the water was at its highest, it was only possible to haul one junk a day through it.

In the bay on the left bank, just under the village, was a large fleet of junks, moored in the order of their arrival and waiting their turn to ascend the rapid.

LARGE JUNK WITH MAST DOWN.

As we passed we saw a large junk careened for repairs to her bottom, and a little further on, drying on the beach, the cargo of another which had been wrecked. Owing to our official escort we were privileged to go right to the head, had we chosen to do so, but we took our place behind three other boats which were waiting. We moored at the narrowest point, where the stream was ascertained by Matheson to be 175 yards wide, with a current running at about 10 knots as far as one could tell, so that the channel would be difficult for a steamer.

LARGE JUNK AT HEAD OF YEH-TAN RAPID.

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The rapid is formed by a great reef of rock projecting diagonally across and down the river. The tracking lines, very long ones, are taken to the stone bund, where large gangs of extra trackers belonging to the village tail on to the rope and, foot by foot, the junk is pulled up, the water boiling and surging round her and making her quiver in every timber. Extra tracking lines are laid out ; we had two, and a larger junk which preceded us had no less than four.

We had tiffin during the preparations and the passage up of the three in front of us, and I then went ashore and watched and photographed the performance, whilst Matheson and Grant were busy taking angles to ascertain the altitude of the mountains. All the boats ascended without mishap, except that the track line of the red-boat snapped and she was instantly swept down. But being only a boat, and close in-shore in the shallow water, she was soon able to sheer in and bring up. Very smartly the sail was immediately hoisted, and the boat got under command by means of the huge steering oar, which is actually longer than the boat herself.

Mr. T. G. Willett, of the China Inland Mission, had preceded us, and his boat and ours tied up together a mile above the rapid. Distance travelled during the day, 33 li.

Next morning we went ashore below a small rapid called the Niu-kau-tan, running past a fine boulder-strewn strand, from which a line of picturesque huts rose up the mountain slope. A pretty ravine down which, dividing the village, came a stream of crystal water, afforded a pleasant contrast to the still turbid Yangtsze. The narrow path ran a little above

the high-water level and connected the little detached farms with their tiny patches and terraces of cultivation. In places the foreshore was being prepared for the catch crops—which can be reaped before the river rises again—and for reed houses required, even at the larger villages, to accommodate the extra trackers. After about four hours I overtook the junk waiting its turn at the foot of the rapid just above the picturesque little town of Pa-tung on the right bank. In a quarter of an hour Matheson and Grant arrived in the red-boat, having been taking angles near Niu-kau. On the road I had an opportunity of studying cottage construction. On the face of the steep bank a space is levelled, and a retaining wall of undressed, unmortared stonework, six or seven feet high, is built against the bank to form the back of the hut. Six unhewn tree-trunks form the uprights, to which the longitudinals for carrying the roof are secured by strips of green bamboo rind. A ridge-pole and a few rafters are attached in the same way; the roof is thatched, and the walls are made of wattlings, into and on which mud is worked. A slight lean-to across the path open to the river, and an overshadowing tree to keep the sun off, and there you are! The result is inexpensive and picturesque as soon as it has weathered. The floor is the ground itself slightly raised.

Beyond Niu-kau the valley opens out and the hills are lower and more sloped, but near Pa-tung they close in and become lofty. On the right bank beautiful cliffs rise on the mountain-side well up above the river. I noticed the hips of a wild rose with graceful sprays, and the blue berries of a plant

resembling broom. The cultivated patches contained sweet potatoes now being harvested, and the *débris* of the maize crop with winter wheat, some well up, and a pea just breaking into lilac flowers. There were a good many low-growing acacias of a flowering type, with the empty pods still hanging.

ROCKY FORESHORE AT NIU-KAU RAPID.

Each cottage had its orange and pummelow trees, the great pale-yellow globes of the latter contrasting with the dark green foliage. The beautiful poplar bearing the white berries which are boiled down for their wax, was also cultivated, but this tree grows wild on the hill-sides in a more shrubby form and lends much colour to the landscape, the tints changing through bronze-green into pale yellow

and then into light red and dark crimson. Some sumachs also afforded patches of colour, and about the houses there were two varieties of ash, one large-leaved resembling our own, and another smaller and more leafy, taking on beautiful yellow and red tints in autumn. A few drooping, feathery cypresses and chestnuts complete the tale. Ferns, so profuse a few days before, were now seldom seen. The ground was largely a red marl with blue-grey beds between. I passed a number of small cottage factories for briquettes. Each briquette is made bearing a trade mark (or character) stamped on it in the wooden mould in which the wet puddled stuff is compressed. One or two small adits were strewn with shale.

Just below Pa-tung, on the left bank, in the pretty village of Wo-lung-to, was a seven-storeyed white pagoda in good preservation, with grotesque figures at the corners. Seen through the red and yellow foliage it was quite a picture.

We were hauled up the rapids with double tracking lines and a breast rope, and then went on till night-fall; then we tied up to the right bank a little below the gloomy rock portals of the Kwan-tu-Kau, better known as the Wu-shan gorge.

So far we found the people everywhere very civil; at the farms and cottages they showed only a natural curiosity, but in the larger villages and towns by the rapids we were mobbed when photographing or using instruments. It was a good-natured crowd, however, and its risible faculties were easily tickled; the only disagreeable thing being the coarse, boisterous guffaw, which broke out especially if in walking one stumbled or slipped. Our clothes were

a source of much interest and curiosity, boots in particular. To look through a binocular or the ground glass of a camera was a great treat, and provoked much exclamation and comment. Distance, about 80 li.

On November 29 we negotiated the small but

COTTAGE ON RIVER BANK, NIU-KAU RAPID.

awkward Mu-chu rapid, at the head of which is a powerful backwater of eddying whirlpools, causing the surface to resemble an assemblage of hillocks and hollows. The wind dropped and the men had a day of continuous rowing and tracking, the tracking being for the most part over the steep sides and faces of jagged rocks, composed of uptilted beds of hard, dark, sedimentary deposit.

Below the higher water-level, the rock faces are much scored by the action of water or small stones lodging in crevices. The silt, of which the water is full, washes round and round each lodged pebble, so that the groove continually descends, and in consequence the rocks are curiously striated.

Here the river is confined by a range of peaks rising abruptly 2,000 to 3,000 feet above it, and each bend in the stream reveals a fresh picture. It is a curious characteristic of the Yangtsze that it does not run down a defined natural valley, but has hewn itself a channel across the mountain ranges. The colouring at this season was warm and harmonious, and the great profusion and variety of giant flowering grasses, as large as Pampas grass, added to the effect.

At the picturesque little village of Nan-mu-yuen we landed and walked till the rough paths ended in cliff, obliging us to take to the red-boat, in which we reached the foot of the rapid at Fu-li-chi. There the cargo of a large wrecked junk was drying on the beach and the junk herself hauled up for repair, her bottom being almost knocked out of her. Junk construction is rather rough, the planks of the flat bottom being almost 1½-inch thick, rather roughly hewn and dovetailed and fastened with iron nails and clamps; there are no knees or ribs, and the only stiffening is that of the bulkheads; nor is any strengthening afforded by the deck, which is composed of loose removable boards; a sort of stringer, however, runs along the sides. The bottom is curved slightly up from the centre and ends in a perfectly flat sloping bow, as does the stern likewise though more rounded in. There is no great

diminution of breadth at the bow, the place where the pilot takes his stand and gives his commands.

From a very pretty village I walked a short way up one side of a beautiful gorge, but in returning to the boat I had to descend the face of three vertical cliffs by slippery worn steps, hanging on the while

TRACKERS ON A ROCK, WU-SHAN GORGE.

to iron chains or bamboo ropes provided for the purpose. We tied up for the night a mile or so above Fu-li-chi, having done only about 30 li.

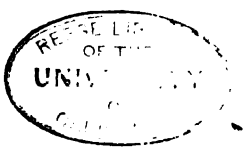
On November 30, St. Andrew's day, at nine o'clock in the morning, we reached the land "flowing with milk and honey,"—the wealthy province of Szechwan, which here marches with the Hu-peh Province. A large white stone with a character

inscription high on the hill-side beside the village of Pu-tai-kau marks the boundary, at a little side gorge and stream. Here we had to negotiate the Pei-shih-tan (Tan meaning rapid), which though short was strong.

We landed at Pu-tai-kau and walked along a road high up on the cliff side, made ten years before by the General hereabouts. Of this road the Chinese are very proud, though as a matter of fact it is a rough, up and down track, sometimes rising to a height of from 400 to 500 feet—as we ascertained by throwing stones over the precipices and taking the time between throwing and hearing the thud below. Thus, if the time were five seconds, that figure squared and multiplied by 16, gives the result as 400 feet.

The great river lay below, almost due east and west, with grand precipices and peaks rising straight from the water to a height of 2,000 or 3,000 feet. Sometimes pyramidal cones, or square keeps, or long bastions, or jagged teeth and spires crowned the summits. Even on the steepest faces grasses and shrubs had found lodgment, and the bright red of the latter distinctly coloured the landscape. Below, ferns grew in profusion and variety, mostly of our greenhouse kinds, including some lovely adiantums. From high-water mark down to the present river level, still very high, some 35 feet of furrowed and chiselled rock bore evidence of the action of water, with such an amount of sediment as the Yangtsze contains. The vertical grooving or scooping already described was everywhere marked—and the striation thus caused usually descended the whole depth. This continual chiselling adds considerably to the

GORGE AT TOP OF RAPID FU-LI-CHI.



general erosive action, and must cause a great undercutting of the mountain sides—which in many places appear very rotten. The formation of numerous overhanging caves at the water line is proof of such destruction.

Our walk lasted till one o'clock, when we reached the village of Ching-shih-tung, at the junction of a

STRIATION ON CLIFF FACE.

large side-gorge. Here the river bends abruptly to the north through scenes of remarkable beauty. We were becoming quite sated with the grandeur of gorges, but certainly the scenery of the upper Yangtsze may rank with the finest in the world.

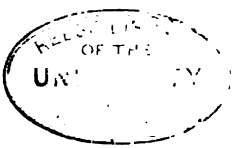
From the point last named, there being no wind, progress was only possible by rowing, as the cliffs were impracticable for tracking, and we made very slow way against the current. Downward-bound

junks take the mid-stream, their great crews rowing lustily for steerage way. The upward junks hug the back eddies and currents close in-shore and go coasting along every tiny point and bight, occasionally crossing the stream when it runs too persistently to one side ; but still they have often, at a projecting cliff or point, to face a stronger current than the oarsmen can beat. Then one of the trackers strips, and, running nimbly down the long thole of the bow steering oar swims to the shore carrying with him a light bamboo hawser, to which he then holds on, while the crew redouble their exertions with oars and poles, or else he makes it fast to a rock and the trackers haul on it.

A hard life is the tracker's, whose pay for the month's journey is 6,200 large cash (equal to about 16 or 17 shillings), plus their food and the right of carrying a small amount of cotton, which they buy at Ichang and sell at Chung-king prices. Their cook too is a well-occupied man, hard at work all day from dawn to dark to provide food for the 22 hungry men who form crew and trackers. His appliances are of the simplest, a small stove in a small space forward amongst the rowers, and a large, shallow, sheet-iron pan 2½ feet across, serving multitudinous purposes, which is his chief utensil.

We had great difficulty at one cliff projection, with deep water right up to it and a strong swirling current round its nose. The bow men hung on with might and main by long, flexible, bamboo boat-hooks to the projecting rock ledges, while the pole men made their bamboos bend under the strain, and the oarsmen put their backs to it, but we were

VIEW UP WU-SHAN GORGE.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twice carried back, and the third time had to cross the stream, losing much ground. Well might the junk captain say, "Oh! Wu-shan gorge—oh! Wu-shan gorge, thou hast cost me thirty piculs of rice!"

He was very angry at the inability of the crew to get past the point where we lost ground, and fairly danced with rage, upbraiding the men and threatening them with a long bamboo, but they only smiled.

The missionary boat, of which we had got well ahead, came up and circumvented this point, and as we had to cross again a little higher up and again lost ground, she jockeyed us well and got a start of a mile or so which we had to make up in the dark. Nevertheless she had a succession of crashing blows on the rocks which we heard distinctly, 250 to 300 yards off, across the river.

This country, where cultivable land has to be filched in patches of a few square feet, is very thinly inhabited. We saw two or three wretched little villages and a few squalid huts. Perched 2,000 feet or so up on one hill-side was a hamlet of two or three houses with some plots of green behind, sloping up the hill at an angle of 45° or 50°, and overhung by steep cliffs.

We tied up at night—for anchors are not used above Ichang—a little inside the west end of the gorge, and next morning a fair wind, plus tracking through strong water, brought us opposite to the walled town of Wu-shan.

CHAPTER IX.

WU-SHAN TO WAN-HSIEN.

THE western entrance of the Wu-shan gorge, if not so striking as that on the east, is still very fine, and well defined on the left bank by a cone-shaped hill, the altitude of which Matheson determined at 2,000 feet. The valley here opens out and the gentler hill-sides are well cultivated and populous. We crossed the river from a point opposite the town in a ferry boat, and walked some three miles along the rough stones or sandy-foreshore. The river here was a succession of strong, swirling runs and rapids, and it was not till two o'clock that the kwat-zu overtook us at Hsia-ma-tan, where many junks were waiting their turn to ascend. At this place there is a V, or rather, Y-shaped rapid, for the currents are deflected from both banks, and, meeting in the centre, form a long, fierce race of water.

We made our way nearly to the head of the procession, but there were still eight or nine boats about us, among which we lay bumping and crashing on the edge of the rapid, with much objurgation going on. At nightfall there were only two boats in front of us, one being Mr. Willett's and the other

that of Mr. Kerr, a mining engineer of the Yangtsze Syndicate, going to prospect on the Tibetan frontier.

It is astonishing how the Chinese put up with the delay and expense which these rapids cause. Apart from any question of river improvement, if they were to put up windlasses for hauling at each rapid

JUNKS TIED UP AT FOOT OF RAPID.

there would be much saving of time and labour. It seems to me that if steam navigation is to be accomplished on the Upper Yangtsze, it will be by having powerful steam tugs or special barges to tow the junks between the rapids, each having her own beat, and leaving the hauling up at the rapids themselves to be done by steam or hand-power capstans.

Above the Hsia-ma-tan rapid, which took us 18 hours to pass, the valley opened out more fully and the hill slopes, well tilled, receded more gently. Flocks of goats and a few kine were more frequent, and even the water buffalo reappeared.

From Ichang thus far we had rarely seen any animals—a few goats, a very few small cattle, one donkey and two or three ponies; but at most cottages and farms the black pig of China was in evidence, frequently tethered close to the building; dogs in abundance too, a mongrel breed—but not so large, fierce, and offensive as those of North China and Manchuria. They either took no notice or merely protested by voice at the presence of the "foreign devil."

Progress was still slow (December 2) owing to the frequency of the rapids, and we had several collisions. But the air was mild (54° at 9 a.m.), and when in the afternoon we walked on the bank, the scene was delightful. The cultivated slopes, the warm red soil and the autumn vegetation, backed by the mountain range we had come through, were pleasant to look upon, while the river, full of life with its ascending and descending craft, and the air full of the shouts and songs of the oarsmen and trackers, filled us with delight. Superb gorges opened out on the right bank, running into the heart of the mountains, which were often crowned with glorious rock bastions, now and again tree-fringed. This combination of inhabited, cultivated ground, backed by nature's own efforts, is to me always more pleasant than the savage grandeur of the gorges themselves. Our walk lay along the famous road (or path) on the hillside, winding in and out of the

ravines, and we passed many picturesque thatched farmhouses and hamlets. At one we saw both banana and cactus plants; bamboos and loquats were frequent, as were oranges and a sort of combination citron and lemon.

We brought up for the night just behind a reef of

WEST ENTRANCE TO FENG-HSIEN GORGE.

rock, which projected from both banks into the river, with a nasty ledge in mid-stream and a short strong rapid. This lay close to the entrance to the Feng-hsien gorge, the last and most beautiful according to report.

Day's distance, about 30 li.

In the morning (December 3) we entered the gorge which, owing to a bend in the river, is only disclosed as you enter it. Near the entrance on the right bank is a pretty hill-climbing village.

The gorge is but a short one and its sides are very precipitous; but, except at its western gate where the mountains are very lofty and are grouped most picturesquely, we were not so much impressed by it as by the Wu-shan. The morning was brilliant with a cool air, and the walk along the path overhanging the water was most enjoyable. Much of this path is, in fact, a gallery hewn out of the face of the cliff, the rough stone forming the path itself. By series of steps it climbs up and down, rising at one point to 500 feet above the water level, and dropping in places to get round sullen ravines, where in wet weather there must be fine cascades and flows of storm-water. Midway a couple of little rest-houses were nestled against the huge overhanging cliff, which bent outwards to the sky above our heads.

At the end of the gorge the river broadens out very considerably and the town of Kwei-chau-fu comes into sight, with two fine pagodas, like guardian spirits, hovering over it on top of the high mountains, one on each side of the river. An ornate joss-house on the left bank watches over the entrance to the gorge in full view of the down-going junks about to enter it. In the middle of the stream a large sand-bank is now laid bare, with a brine spring, from which brine is ladled into boats for conveyance to evaporating works on the right bank. Opposite, on the left bank, there appeared to be extensive coal workings just below the city.

Owing to the shallowness of the water, the river being distributed over a very wide area, we must have had quite half-a-mile of tow-line out in approaching the town. We tied up under the

walls soon after 4 p.m., having taken four days to accomplish what Mr. Hobson took 1½ days to do, though he started lower down.

Distance for the day, about 30 li. Distance from Ichang, 115 miles.

About 5 o'clock we went ashore, escorted by our good-looking "soldier," and had a long tramp

GALLERY CUT OUT OF SIDE OF CLIFF.

through the narrow paved streets, crowded and noisome, of the city, till on its upper side we came to the telegraph office. Here we found awaiting us the message that Mr. W—— had promised, with news as to the Boer War. Mr. Fong, the telegraph superintendent, a Shanghai man, spoke English well and was very civil.

Next day we went in state to pay our respects to

the magistrate. We had blue chairs and red cards, and were pioneered by two soldiers in red coats with large black characters on their backs. Mr. Hsia accompanied us as interpreter. Our red-boat fired off three bombs for a salute as we started.

The distance was short, and except for the "look-see" of the thing, it would have been much more agreeable to walk, especially as in ascending the steep river bank and flights of stone stairs to the city the chairs were inclined at a most disagreeable angle. As we passed through the streets the extraordinary number of butchers' shops was noticeable—pork, beef and mutton in profusion, and very excellent the mutton looked.

When we reached the Yamen, we found that a change had taken place in the magistracy and that the old magistrate, though still residing there, did not like to receive as he was no longer an official. So off we went to another Yamen, or rather, to the local examination hall, used as a Yamen. Instead of separate cubicles as at Peking and Canton, there were a great number of long wooden tables resting on stone supports with forms roofed over, and a broad passage running up the middle, behind which were steps leading to the official reception rooms—of the usual dirty and tawdry character. Over the entrance, suspended by a string, hung a broken potsherd, the significance of which we did not understand. The usual delays took place and the usual crowd of officials and hangers-on collected, groups gathering round each chair and staring with might and main. One official was sent to ascertain what was the foreign fashion of receiving—shaking hands, or how ? When we went up we were received

most effusively by the great man, who had put on his finest robes, large bead necklaces, and mandarin button. He insisted on taking the lowest place, was very polite, and seemed much pleased at our having called. The talk did not amount to much—mainly expressions of concern at the inconvenience and danger we must have had in coming up the rapids. He had been thirty years in Szechwan, and said the people in those parts were very good and quiet. He thought that making a railway up the river would be difficult, but expressed himself personally in favour of railways—had travelled on them in the North. At the finish he insisted on coming down to our chairs with us, and was certainly a most affable old gentleman.

On the foreshore under the walls of the town were several briquette factories, on a rather larger scale than those previously mentioned. These factories stood below high-water level, where, as at other places along the shore, quite a small town of temporary houses is built, as the river falls. The river banks were cultivated.

Between twelve and one there was a great banging of guns and gongs, and at the latter hour we moved off, but only to tie up to a sandbank a mile or so above the town. Just below was a huge unwieldy junk—the second we had seen—loaded with bales of wick-grass and having a sampan lashed on each side to help in supporting the towering mass above. Shortly after, both Mr. Kerr's (the engineer's) and Mr. Willett's kwat-zus joined us, but we made no further progress, the excuse being that Kwei-chau-fu was such an attractive place that the trackers could not tear themselves from it. One

would not have thought so, unless because of the flesh-pots, for which we saw such unusual provision in the morning. Hard by the kwat-zu a very pretty little kingfisher with an emerald green back, reddish yellow breast, white collar, and a very prominent beak, pursued his avocations from the perch of an oar blade. When the little fellow dipped into the water, he gave a curious little flip, as if sitting on it for an instant.

On December 5 we started early, and about breakfast-time reached the Pa-mu-tze rapid—a broad, shallow run not very troublesome, but here our trusty tow-line for the first time gave way. However, we did not lose much ground as the kwat-zu was promptly headed in-shore and avoided collision with a cargo junk coming up astern of us. The river valley now opened out wide with gently swelling hills on which were well-tilled and prosperous looking little farmhouses, each embowered in shade. The hill ranges still ran transversely to the river direction.

After breakfast we did an hour's walking on a pretty winding path past the little homesteads where kine and goats were fairly numerous. We saw substantial mills for grinding kao-liang, a sort of millet resembling maize in everything but the grain itself. A weighted millstone, or edge-runner, is worked by cattle in a fair-sized, circular, stone trough.

Soon after tiffin we came to the An-ping rapid, which, though usually not much of an obstruction, seemed to me the worst we had encountered. Its upper part is a straight down-throw of water, the lower shot off diagonally, forming a long, turbulent

race, the roar of which we heard as we came up the river. Taking advantage of the backwater we crept up close to the neck of the lower part, and when our turn came we were hauled up by sheer force against a current running 10 or 12 knots, by a large extra gang of trackers.

TOP OF GIANT FLOWERING GRASSES.

I stayed on board, being busy with photography, and was interested in the experience, though I trembled for my efforts. Our big boat habitually quivered to every movement of the oars or strain of the tracking rope, and everything shook if one walked across the cabins, but perhaps her strength lay in her extreme fragility. Now she rolled from

side to side and complained loudly in every part at the strain she was subjected to. Several times when the rope caught on the rocks on the bank, it took several men to lift the line off, so great was the strain, but there was no mishap, and going a mile or so above the rapid, we joined the others, and tied up for the night. The temperature was about 60°, morning and evening. The distance travelled during the day was about 60 li.

Above the rapid called Erl-tao-hsi the hills became bolder and higher, some peaks being well over 2,000 feet, but the shores were easy, though bestrewn with boulders, among which the farmers had planted catch-crops as the river went down—a very stony croft indeed. The steep hill-slopes lying back at an angle of 40° or 45° were all cultivated, and some of the farm-houses were very substantial, tile-roofed and embowered in trees, poplar, ash, weeping-willow, firs, and others I knew not. Some of the giant grasses attained a height of from 15 to 20 feet and were extremely handsome. The ravines were numerous, wide and deeply cleft by water erosion, often a succession of stone glides too steep to stand on, with deep water-holes at intervals. Little, quaint joss-houses stood on projecting knolls under beautiful trees facing the river. Here, as elsewhere, I noticed straw stacks wound round the trunks of trees as in Japan, and also in Italy. For a day or two we had been in a region of cotton cultivation, some of the pods being still on, but generally the dry plants were now being uprooted and bundled. At one large farm my photographic operations were resented and clods of earth thrown at me.

Progress all day (December 6) was very slow owing to the strong current, numerous small rapids, and in the afternoon to the head wind. Soon after four o'clock we made fast to the left bank opposite to the village of Ku-lin-to, and having landed we strolled in the dusk along the hill-side path to the

LITTLE JOSS-HOUSE AND FINE TREES.

Miao-chi-tze rapid, which looked a bad one in the dim light. The river here narrows to 100 yards. Distance, about 35 li.

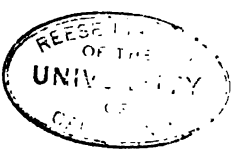
Rain fell in the night, and next morning we had some showers, the sky being overcast; we were now approaching the land of clouds. With a fair wind we crept up to the rapid, which was very swift but V-shaped, so that we were able to reach its

neck before negotiating it, and the water was deep close in-shore. At the next rapid, an hour higher up, we passed a large cargo junk which had come to grief.

We landed after breakfast and walked for a couple of hours along the left bank. For a long way the river ran almost straight in a sort of gut between pyramid-shaped hills with deep water-worn gorges between. At the foot of each gorge, a rill of clear water flowed to the Yangtsze, over a flight of giant steps of bare stone and near each stood a little farm shaded and hemmed in by trees. I noticed grape vines, castor-oil plants, and the large-leaved paulowna.

The hill-sides run back from the river at a sharp, regular angle, almost like the glacis of a fortification, and are but sparsely provided with vegetation, the stone outcropping too freely. What land there is is red and rich, and well cultivated in terraces. The strata lie perfectly flat and give the appearance of a wide bund along the river, very convenient for the trackers. At one spot we came into a real little rapid, due to the back-water running strongly up-stream behind a point beyond which flowed the heavy down-stream current. The men had to run quickly to keep the line ahead of the vessel, and the go-betweens had much to do in preventing the drooping line from catching on rocks in the shingle. Towards midday we passed on the right bank a scattered village behind which, on a high hill, stood a tall pagoda watching over its "feng-shui." Here the river bent to the north, and we had a view of the town of Yun-yang, which we soon after reached on the right bank. Facing the town there stood

LANDSLIP WHICH CAUSED NEW RAPID IN THE YANGTSZE.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on the opposite side of the river a picturesque wood-enshrouded temple, erected, like the pagoda, for geomantic purposes.

The afternoon was wet but the wind held fair, and we rattled along gaily till just before dusk, when we tied up below the famous New Rapid, caused some years before by a hill slipping into the river. For long, this rapid had been such a terror, that at times traffic had been suspended. Now it had worn itself a course through the *débris*, and, though still one of the worst in the river, it was much improved. In the neighbourhood there was little evidence of the catastrophe which had occurred for nature had been busy with a hand of healing and the slopes were green with fields of sugar-cane.

Here we were transferred to the care of the captain of a new red-boat, which had been sent by the Szechwan authorities to escort us.

Distance for the day, 100 li, quite the best day's work we had done.

Before breakfast (December 8) our skipper had dexterously worked his way up along the side of the rapid and past a dozen other junks which were waiting to ascend. We lay under the lee of a projecting rock ledge, past which the water rushed with tremendous force. In the middle of the rapid, where the currents thrown off from either bank met, there was a great turmoil of water flowing at the rate of quite 12 knots, and cleaving its way, wedge-shaped, through the tumultuous surge of backwater which formed swirling whirlpools, often 40 or 60 feet across and three or four feet deep, constantly altering in shape, disappearing and re-appearing. It was a savage bit of water

and a long way the worst we had seen. It would take a very powerful steamer to ascend it. The downward-bound junks kept the middle, but were twisted about and sometimes turned sideways. We went up on the left, which was mostly used, but many junks ascend on the right bank. We had double tracking-lines and a breast rope laid out, and the ascent was accomplished after some

TOP STATION AT NEW RAPID.

slight mishaps but without much trouble. Gangs of extra trackers, largely composed of boys, girls, and even young children, some of whom looked pinched and hungry, were employed. A little village of thatched timber-and-lath cottages had sprung up on the fore shore below high-water level to accommodate these.

The strata here are inclined, and consist of superimposed beds of sandstone, over one of which, or one of shale, or of marl, the top layers had slid.

SUGAR MILL WORKED BY BUFFALO AND OX.

Close to the sugar-cane fields I came on a rustic but substantial cane-mill. The rollers, made of stone and vertical, stood in a solid framing and were driven by a travelling beam, drawn by two buffaloes. The juice ran by a pipe into a large reservoir under which a gentle heat was applied, then into another slightly hotter, and thence was ladled to the top pan of a battery under which the heat was much greater. When sufficiently boiled it was ladled into large circular or square moulds lined with paper, and it cooled into clayey sugar, not very sweet. The canes were poor and small, the climate not being, I suppose, sufficiently tropical for good sugar-growing. The owners were very civil and allowed me to see everything and to take a photograph of the mill.

Since leaving the Ichang gorge we had seen no fishermen, but here I saw first a heron, and was then not surprised to see fishermen with their long-handled nets and boats with drop nets. On the crests of the hills forts, erected during the Tai-ping rebellion, were not infrequent.

During the afternoon we passed along a stretch of the river running in a trough between high, flat, stone banks of horizontal strata, with pyramidal hills, from 1,200 to 1,600 feet high on either hand, and with pretty villages and homesteads around.

We tied up at Hwang-pi-chi. Distance about 60 li. The wind though light had been fair, and had helped us a good deal.

The morning (December 9) was dull and cheerless with a light wind upstream and I continued my voyage, leaving Matheson and Grant on shore. Grant overtook me after noon, having followed

in our red-boat, but he did not praise the escort, neither the skipper nor the soldier crew having proved nearly so smart in handling their boat as our late hook-nosed old captain and his stalwart fellows, who had come up with us from Ichang.

Just as we had finished our tiffin and were rounding a rocky point on to a shallow sandy bight, our "boy" came running in to tell us that the Captain thought the missionary boat was wrecked. With our glasses we made out a crowd on the beach, and a vessel lying on her side, half submerged, with two red-boats and a sampan or two alongside. Before we got to her, Matheson met us, and told us that he had been on board at the time; that the boat, while being tracked close in shore, had struck a rock and, before it could be run ashore, had heeled over, and settled in shallow water. Matheson had passed Mrs. Willett and her little girl through the window and had himself been pulled through, but there was much trouble in saving the baggage, of which unfortunately there was a great quantity, as the Willetts were returning from home.

The accident happened at a place called Peng-sha-chi, where, after sending our red-boat to help, we decided to tie up for the rest of the day and offer shelter for the night to Mr. Willett, who had to remain, as his things were all spread out on the beach. We were just in sight of Wan-hsien and of two tall pagodas high over it on a lofty hill. The distance travelled during the day was about 60 li.

About 8 next morning (Sunday, December 10) we got up to Wan-hsien and moored under the walls of the city below a sort of summer house with fantastic curved roofs. The steep banks of the foreshore

TEMPLE AT WAN-HSIEN.

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were covered for a mile or two with temporary buildings, used as workshops and retail shops, arranged in regular streets, convenient no doubt for the passing junk crews. The town lies on a long curved bay formed by the river on the left bank, with a big shingle bed on the opposite bank.

After tiffin Matheson, Mr. Hsia and I procured chairs and, preceded by two soldiers, went to call on the magistrate, a Chih-li man who had been here for three years. At the entrance to the Yamen were several prisoners burdened with cangues, and Matheson noticed others in cages through which their heads protruded.

We were at once admitted, and the great man was very polite, choosing a lower seat than ours. He was not so genial as our friend at Kwei-chau-fu, but was business-like and promised to order chairs and coolies for the journey.

In returning we were escorted by four Yamen runners, dirty-looking fellows, who of course had to be paid for the attention. The cost of the visit, including the hire of three chairs with two coolies each, and the bonus to our two soldiers, came to 900 cash—or about 2s. 6d.

The town, through only a small part of which we passed, looked very dirty with poor shops. It did not correspond with the imposing appearance it presented towards the river.

In the course of an afternoon walk we attracted an unusual amount of attention, and when we gained the country outside we had a "tail" of several hundred *gamins*. At first their remarks were polite, but later they raised shouts of "ta-ta" (strike, strike), and even threw a few stones. Occasionally

one of the elders tried to stop the row, one man in particular attaching himself to us to show us the way and prevent disturbance. A man made a rhyming couplet about us as we passed, something to this effect :—

"Worthy foreigners, right you are,
If they were not well-behaved, how could they walk so far?"

This was perhaps intended for sarcasm, for it was addressed to our well-intentioned guide when he tried to stop the clamour by saying that the foreign gentlemen were of a decent sort.

We came on some orange-gardens presenting a plentiful crop, the rich yellow colour of the fruit contrasting finely with the dark handsome leafage. We bought 100 of the mandarin, or loose skinned kind, for three cash apiece, or about twelve for a penny, of course paying ever so much more than the usual retail price.

From Ichang we had now travelled 170 or 180 miles, or rather more than half the distance to Chung-king—much the worst half, however, so far as navigation is concerned.

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CHAPTER X.

LAND JOURNEY—WAN-HSIEN TO SUI-TING.

HAVING resolved to interrupt my river voyage at Wan-hsien and to proceed inland into north-western Szechwan, through a region seldom visited by travellers other than missionaries, I had been using my spare time in making the needful preparations. I was loath to quit the familiar little kwat-zu for the discomfort of Chinese inns, but, after breakfast (December 11), I sent my things ashore and bade good-bye to Matheson and Grant, who were to continue their voyage to Chung-king. My company as re-arranged, consisted of Mr. Hsia (interpreter), his "boy" (who was also to take care of me), the cook, five coolies, six chair-bearers, and four soldiers, or yamen-runners, sent by the magistrates. The coolies carried our effects and tinned food, each taking 80 catties (or 100 lbs.) in two parcels slung on the ends of a bamboo carrying-pole. We had two sedan chairs, which we had had to buy for 2,800 small cash (nearly 7s.) each. They consisted of a light frame-work, covered with blue cloth or canvas, with projecting roof, rope seat and two short bamboos. Two bearers walked in front, one behind. The runners were attired in peaked hats, dirty red

surcoats, with characters in black on the back, over the usual coolie's cotton clothes, short loose cotton drawers, and bare legs.

There were no banks here connected with those in Shanghai but, through the intervention of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, I would obtain supplies of sycee from the missions. Against my cheques on Shanghai I received at the Inland Mission six "dings" of silver just as they had come from the mould, each worth about 9 or 10 taels (or 30 shillings) the weight of each being written on it. Then Mr. Hsia went to a money-changer and had this changed into cash, which run about 1,180 small cash to the dollar here. Mr. Davis, the missionary in charge, kindly promised to wire to the Mission at Chung-king to send 50 taels more to meet me at Pau-ning-fu. Lastly, the chair-hong who supplied the coolies and who made a contract to convey me, had to receive their advance, so that it was 12.15 before the real start was made. The captain of our red-boat fired a very fizzly salute, and we left Wan-hsien more or less bathed in mist. We climbed the steep hill behind and, crossing over a spur, dropped down to the official road running to Cheng-tu, the capital of the Province.

This is the finest road in this part of the world, and quite renowned for its magnificence and solidity. It consists of a path from 6 to 10 feet wide, generally about 8 feet, flagged with rough-hewn stone, and it becomes at every incline a series of stone steps. The country is exceedingly pretty, not to say picturesque. The road lay for the most part close to the bed of a clear, shallow stream, sometimes

running quietly over a gravel bed, sometimes tumbling among rocks and boulders.

Steep hills stood on either hand, crowned with little villages and fortified posts of some antiquity, or with fantastic rock cliffs, forming outlines of quaint castles and other objects of fanciful shapes. The hill-sides were terraced from top to bottom wherever practicable, and the sloping banks of the terraces, even when almost vertical, had to bear a crop of beans. The greater part of the land was lying fallow, under water (for the hills from top to bottom are irrigated), or else were being ploughed in, also under water, by great water buffaloes, preparatory to the spring planting of rice. The Kao-liang or millet had of course been taken off, and the hemp crop was also off. In the ground were winter-wheat, peas, beans, cabbage, a variety of turnip, and a radish almost as large as turnip. Many fields were covered with the opium poppy, about four or five inches high, now being thinned out—a tribute to the mild winter climate of Szechwan. Sugar-cane growth ceased soon after we left the river, but here and there were handsome clumps of giant flowering grasses. Their stems are jointed and contain, I believe, a useful pith.

Cottages were sprinkled about everywhere, and villages here and there, the population being evidently large. Very handsome and ornately carved stone paitans, or commemorative ornamental arches, adorn the entrance to some of the villages. The houses are well built, having dressed-stone foundation courses with brick above, and tiled roofs. Large substantial farmhouses with white-washed walls and picturesque roofs are numerous.

Over the narrow, shallow stream, which showed no sign of being torrential, despite the heavy rainfall, we saw strong narrow bridges, oblongs of stone laid on straight uprights. The formation is sandstone and often visible when a brooklet comes down the hill-side in a pure stone channel. It makes a good building stone. The soil is a rich red-brown, and bears two crops a year.

A constant stream of coolies passed along the road with the inevitable bamboo and divided load. Paper in close packages formed the staple, but they carried also a good-looking iron in pigs of about one square foot and 2 or 2½ inches thick, salt in hard blackish-red cakes (so hard and heavy that I at first mistook it for iron), vermicelli, the wick of a rush used for candles, and a very excellent, clean coal in lumps, soft, free from pyrites, and probably good coking fuel. Close to the mines (some 40 li distant) this sells for 1½ cash per catty—or, roughly, four shillings per ton. We saw magpies, paddy birds, sparrows, lovely little kingfishers, water-wagtails, doves, a bird somewhat resembling the blackbird, but more dusky, and a smaller, very beautiful bird, with a peacock-blue back and an Indian-red tail, which he kept opening and spreading fanwise.

After going 15 li we stopped for 40 minutes at Shi-chi-pu; and arrived at 5 p.m. at Fu-ssü-pu (30 li further) at the best inn I had yet seen. Some Chinamen who were occupying the principal room were unceremoniously turned out in my favour, and left behind, in revenge, a bouquet of opium. The floor was boarded, the windows intact, and door close-fitting.

Next morning we followed the paved Cheng-tu causeway which crossed hills and valleys and many high, single-arched, substantial and handsome stone bridges, some so curved that over them, as on the hill-sides, the road became a flight of steps. Under the arch of one of these a horde of beggars had camped out for the night, and were now at their morning fires. We breakfasted at San-tsien-pu (25 li), and then walked along the valley amid beautiful scenery, fine substantial farmhouses, and picturesque, if dirty, villages, till we accomplished another 25 li, arriving at 12 at Feng-sui.

We saw much opium poppy, and the low four-leaved palm, from the coir-like sheathing of whose lower stem are made coverings for travelling bedding and other things. The hill-tops were crowned with small, straight firs with bushy tops, also with many cypresses, some short and cone-shaped like Noah's Ark trees, others taller and looser in growth.

After leaving our luncheon place we climbed a steep mountain side to a height of 2,300 feet in superb scenery with terrace cultivation. Then turning away from the direction of the valley, which ran south-west, we passed down a gloomy, romantic gorge to cross a stream after which, by a narrow winding passage we ascended to a height of 2,300 feet. Then we made another and steeper ascent, and suddenly, through a grove of araucarias, we found ourselves on a sort of plateau, or shallow valley, well cultivated, and watered by a trickling stream. After several miles of this, we approached the crest of the divide and, just at the finish, another steep and unnecessary climb brought us, at 5 o'clock, after a walk of 37 li since tiffin, to Ting-tse-yeh,

perched at an elevation of 2,800 feet above the sea, almost on the crest of one of the highest mountains in the region. I was beginning to discover that Chinese roads do not always follow water-courses or the easiest contours.

Near the top of the pass, in a scene of savage grandeur, beside the path were some little shrines before which most of the porters left a joss-stick burning.

At the head of a waterfall were works, driven by water-power, for grinding course china-clay which had been fired at adjacent ovens; the grinding being done by water-driven levers or tilt hammers. Beyond was the factory for making the porcelain into rice bowls.

The ferns everywhere were lovely, banks of them in great variety grew both in the valleys and on the mountains. There were very pretty mosses too, and, on the hills, many bright red-berried blackthorns. I saw two horses in the course of the day. Little pigs disposed to grub too much have here small painted wicker pottles fastened to their snouts, but I saw only a few so adorned. We often met pigs led along by the traditional straw rope round leg or neck, and displaying the proverbial perversity as to choice of path and time. I saw no pheasants nor duck, only some curious very long-tailed birds, the size of magpies, quite unknown to me.

The temperature at midday was at 64°, in the evening at 49°. Our inn here was none of the best. It was evil-smelling, but tolerably private.

At night the air was cold, and next morning in the valley the mists hung low and blue, obscuring

everything ; on the hill-sides the herbage and shrubs glistened with dew but, on the opposite mountain-tops there was a cheerful red glow which soon crept down and caused the mists to wreathe and disappear, disclosing in the absolutely still air the water-covered paddy fields glittering like so many crystal mirrors.

The road wound along the side of the mountain, sometimes dipping a little, but on the whole rising, till at a little group of rest-houses, 8 li from the start, the aneroid registered almost 3,300 feet above sea-level. Here we halted for breakfast, and then began the descent of the steep stone stairway till we reached the lower ground at a hamlet called Liao-yeh-ho, where a fine, single-arched, covered-in bridge spanned the stream ; booths on the bridge showed it was used as a market place. This was 1,700 feet above sea level.

This lower ground could not be described as a plain, for, when looked at from a mountain top, it presented the appearance of a confused mass of low hills of all heights up to a few hundred feet, with moist patches of glistening paddy fields between. There was a meandering stream, but it was hard to say how it ran.

Here opium cultivation re-appeared. The mountain tops themselves were wooded, fir, cypress, and araucaria being the most conspicuous trees, and there was wealth of fern and undergrowth, dwarf oak and fiery sumach, blackthorn, small bamboo, and beautiful, plumed, drooping grasses many feet high. Up the ravines the terrace cultivation crept, witnessing to the constant toil and trouble of the industrious Chinese farmer.

I noticed many brambles, which I was told were fruit-bearing, also wild strawberries still in fruit, and the familiar leaf of the daisy. Inquiring about animals, I was told there were a very few monkeys, some wild sheep and more wild pigs; foxes, wild cats, and three varieties of pheasant, all about the same size, one with close plumage, another which I took to be the ordinary species, and the third with an enormously long tail, which I fancy must be the Amherst pheasant. None of these abound, as they are shot for their flesh or feathers.

Not very far from the town of Liang-shan-hsien, which was 45 li from our last breakfast place, were seven or eight neat stone paitans at short intervals, erected, according to their inscriptions, by Imperial decree, to span the roadway and tell of the honour and devotion of some official or of the faithfulness of a spouse; and here and there a tablet had been erected to some magistrate by the people of his district.

To avoid the staring crowd, I got into my chair as we approached the town. One soldier walked in front, shouting to the people to clear out of the way, and two more supported the chair poles along the narrow, bustling streets to the inn, which was a good one, as inns here go.

At this place our soldiers left us, receiving a "cum-shaw," or present, of 150 cash per day apiece. They were harmless, good-natured, willing creatures, watching closely over every footstep, officious in clearing the way for us, but by no means able to keep off the inquisitive crowd at an inn, or to stay the clamour of the street. I forwarded my card to the prefect with a request for further protection, and

he, having sent to examine my passport, the first time in China I had ever had it applied for, bestowed on me four genuine soldiers, known to be such by a knife, the only weapon they bore, stuck in the umbrella-cover over their shoulder; by the black cloth wound turban-wise round their heads, and by cloth anklets. They seemed to stand much in awe of me, and, as they walked just in front and behind me, spoke to one another in whispers, for which I was not ungrateful, as the Chinese voice is unmelodious, though the Szechwan accent is considered a soft one.

This town is not large, but is said to contain 30,000 families, or about 120,000 inhabitants. The Chinese pack close, and the streets we passed through were simply a moving mass of folk. It stands beside the mountain range over which we had just come, on a far-reaching plain, along which one may travel for 200 li in the Chung-king direction, and 45 li towards Cheng-tu. Its elevation is 1,650 feet.

It is a great centre of rice production and paper-making, and is a mart and distributing centre for foreign piece-goods coming from Chung-king, and for silks and other fancy wares from Cheng-tu.

We arrived at 12.55 but did not leave till 3.5 p.m. Although I had paid at Wan-hsien an advance of 20,000 cash to the chair-hong, almost covering the whole sum due for coolies to Sui-ting, the head coolie, who was responsible for the whole "shebang," had brought none of it to pay for his coolies' food and lodging on the way, but had actually helped himself to 3,500 cash, which they were carrying for our expenses. When money ran short, he expected me

to find more; but I told him to fend for himself, and he had to set to work to borrow in the town. Meantime the coolies had not got their rice, and were not ready to start. Then I was told that it was too late to complete the regular stage, and that we should have to remain for the night where we were; all of which I cut short by starting on foot with Mr. Hsia and two soldiers, telling the rest to follow.

Leaving the crowded streets by the North Gate we emerged on the fine open plain where we had no longer the official road but a stone causeway some three or four feet wide running across the plain. From a short distance the town, with its fine pagodas and quaint curved roofs, looked quite pretty against its mountain background.

After trudging 15 li we waited for the chairs to come up, and, having resumed our march, soon came to the foot of the lower mountain range which we had seen across the plain. Here I left my chair, and walked up the steep slopes till at 5.25 p.m., 25 li from the town, we reached the apparent summit and found refuge in a poor inn on the outskirts of a village, called Ki-tai-pu. There was but one room—L-shaped—containing seven or eight dirty straw mattresses on wooden frames, the corners being lumbered with various agricultural products. A lath-and-plaster partition divided me from the pig-styes, from which came loud grunts and snores. The wood smoke of the kitchen fire and the loud voices of the coolies penetrated through the open entrance. The floor was of clay, as usual, and not of the cleanest.

We slept none the worse, and at 6.55 a.m.

(December 14) were on the road once more. Although the village was a tiny one, it possessed, as many others do, a large theatre; but play-going here is a matter of subscription beforehand, and there are no tickets at the door. The road still rose slightly and then ran along the flank of a hill crest with a big wide ravine opening to view, and when we had gone about 8 li, we halted for breakfast at a little roadside "pub," where the men had their morning rice and I my "coffee-chow," as the "boy" calls it. Then we made a steep descent down a mountain side, all wet and dewy, and covered with dwarf bamboo—a paradise for magpies. At the foot was a paper-mill, the material for which is provided by the bamboos. The stems are steeped in pits containing lime and water, then crushed on a stone floor, on which revolves a millstone driven by oxen; the fibre and pulp are put into tanks of water, into which men dip a frame containing a fine slit-bamboo sieve of about 4 feet by 14 inches. This sieve, after a few minutes' immersion, is deftly lifted from the frame, and the thin coating of wet pulp is deposited on top of many similar layers, which are kept exactly to their limits by vertical guide-bars. When dry, the sheets separate and form the soft yellow-brown paper well known in China.

The narrow valley gradually broadened out, and, after leaving the water-course and crossing some low spurs of the jumble of hills which give the valley picturesqueness, we came out on a wide plain of rice-fields lying fallow and water-covered, the raised stone causeway looking as if set in an inundated district, a fever-stricken region it must

be in summer. Crossing this, and then some low foot-hills to another plain, we reached the small town of Shün-sze-pu, 42 li from our breakfast-place. The temperature was about 62°, but the moist air and warm sun made one perspire freely in walking.

From this point, 1,220 feet above sea-level, we had some 15 li of mere plain and gentle ascent, meeting many coal porters, mostly youths, each carrying 80 catties in two baskets on a bamboo, for which they get 140 cash per day.

We then commenced abruptly the ascent of a range which, as far as the haze allowed one to see, ran for some distance in a south-westerly direction. The road was almost entirely a steep, stone stairway up to the crest of the pass, 2,400 feet high. Half-way up we passed a coal mine, an open adit in the hill-side, running about 1,000 feet in, we were told, with an incline upwards, and cross galleries. The seam was about seven feet high and gave a good soft coal, sold at the pit mouth at 60 cash for 80 catties, about 3s. 3d. per ton. The miners work double shifts, day and night, for 120 cash per day and their "chow," and extract 160 piculs (9½ tons) per day. The mine has been worked more than 10 years.

Equally abrupt, if less lengthy, was the descent, fir-shadowed and fern-fringed (the *Osmunda regalis* appearing), where, at 1,850 feet above sea level, we dropped into a valley trending westwards, and so narrow that its walls could almost be touched. Soon it widened somewhat, and at 30 li from our lunch halt, and at 4.25 by the clock, we stopped for the night at a tiny roadside inn at Kwan-yui-

tang, 1,780 feet above sea level. At these small places the air is purer than in the filthy villages and towns, and there is better ventilation than at the more pretentious inns; usually also one is not pestered by a rude, noisy and inquisitive mob. But in this instance the courtyard was soon full of sightseers, who crept up the steps to the central apartment. To avoid them I closed the doors and retired into one of the side rooms. A Babel of clamour arose, and presently the crowd began to press into the centre room, laughing and shouting behind and whispering in the front. This was too much! I rushed out violently, using the worst language at my command, whereupon those in the room retreated so precipitately that some fell down the steep steps, one man rolling down in the midst of showers of sparks from a small warming pan he was carrying. The crowd howled with delight, but though they did not venture in any more, they thronged into an adjoining room, and began to break holes in the lath-and-plaster partition. I crossed to the other room, and the same thing was repeated. Fortunately, I was then pretty well through tiffin, and, with the aid of "As you Like It," I shortened time till the coolies were ready. Then I walked out of the town, about a quarter of a mile, but was sorry for it. The soldiers could with difficulty keep back the tumultuous crowd of boys and youths screeching out "to strike." Mr. Hsia was a little nervous and said that it was thus trouble always began, but the disturbance went no further than noise and rowdyism.

The people here, as all over China apparently, wore the everlasting blue-cotton clothes. The

women in this district were all small-footed and stumped about in most ungainly fashion. One day I passed a herd of pigs driven along and each pig had the very neatest of little straw shoes on its tootsicums! It is true that the roads are hard—I find them so; 25 to 30 miles per day on a paved road does not suit European boots. But the narrow Szechwan paved road has this advantage over the roads of North China that it confines the passer-by to the path, thus preventing the injury to the crops common in the north, where carters and pedestrians make a road for themselves if they don't like the beaten track. Also, whether wet or fine, the traveller can go dry-shod.

My soldiers were too attentive. If at one of our halts I walked 20 yards from them to look at the country or examine a plant, one of them was after me at once. They were not nearly so rough to passers-by as my former guards had been, nor so noisy.

Before I fell asleep I heard a violent altercation between the master of the inn and the coolies, about mats to which the coolies had helped themselves, and in the morning I lectured the head coolie as to this and his other sins, threatening to visit the first Yamen. He was very contrite, and at the finish kowtowed and promised to amend his ways.

Crossing the hill-range at right angles, we bore north, and after 10 li, dropped down to a little inn, where we breakfasted. Beyond a tangle of small low hills we struck a small river, called Chung-pao-tsa, 1,150 feet above sea-level, running sluggishly over a sandy bed. Then, after traversing a plain with poppy-growing much in evidence, we quite

suddenly ran into a long, narrow, densely crowded town, called Ma-lui-chang, 30 li from our starting point for the day. At Tah-shih-chiao, 15 li further on, we again struck the river, here considerably larger and spanned by a long stone-slab bridge, of which half had been carried away. For half a mile it runs north-west, across a small range of hills, over a sandstone rocky bed with quick fall. Then the path opens out. The rivers and streams we had seen ran in well-defined channels, and showed no signs of torrential action.

A few li down we quitted the left bank, and for hours worked our way through a most confusing jumble of low steep hills, ascending and descending thousands of stone steps.

Twenty-five li further, we came suddenly on another long, narrow town, Ting-tse-pu, where the street was densely packed and the usual offensive rabble followed us. After getting through, Mr. Hsia, who was rather nervous at these places, advised me to have a loaded revolver at hand at night, because of ill-conditioned people in the towns or robbers in remote country places. Pushing on another 17 li, we arrived at 5.15 at Yeh-tsin-tse, 1,000 feet up, where we found quite a good inn.

The features of the country, the cultivation, and the road traffic here, were such as we had seen for days. No new birds were noticed save a small hawk, but we heard a song like that of a thrush in the thickets. The crows had white necks, quite clerical-looking.

Next morning (December 16) after a steep climb of some 10 li, we halted for breakfast on the crest of the pass, 1,750 feet above sea-level. Then we

dropped down 1,000 feet by a succession of stairs and rough paths to a narrow valley and streamlet, with comfortable little farms around, where I saw the banana growing, but I was told that the fruit does not ripen. I noticed a small iris, a dog-rose, much dwarf oak and a Spanish chestnut, firs, and the cypress. Another 20 li brought us to a picturesque stone tower, loop-holed for musketry, much resembling our Border peels. Our soldiers said it marked the point to which the minor officials of Sui-ting come to welcome the arrival of any high mandarin. But I was afterwards informed that this building, together with others on the heights near the town, was erected 100 years ago in troublous times.

As we were evidently approaching Sui-ting, I took to my chair and was carried for 2 or 3 li through a succession of small hamlets till we struck the river, here about 100 yards wide. It is shallow above the town but navigable for small craft, and, below it, for much larger boats. The town lies on the right bank, which rises steeply from the river. We crossed on good-sized ferry boats, running every few minutes. They were propelled by a man in the stern, who with his right hand worked a peculiar curved steering oar over the stern, and with his left hand a side oar.

I was carried through squalid streets, with some decent shops, up to a better-class inn, with rooms rather smaller than usual, where the door and window were at once, of course, beset by a curious crowd. After making myself as presentable as possible, I went in my chair to present my letter of introduction to Mr. Polhill, of the China Inland

Mission, who received me most kindly and invited me to stay over Sunday.

The Mission, consisting of five members, including two ladies, settled within a group of buildings and courtyards, constituting a better-class Chinese house, had been in Sui-ting only about five months. The Chinese already seemed not unfriendly, though at first they had kept their children aloof owing to the prevalent belief that missionaries kidnap children for the purpose of extracting their brains. Mr. and Mrs. Polhill's youngest son (the only one at the Mission) was a bright little boy, seven years of age, who spoke and thought in Chinese, and, having readily talked and played with Chinese children, had done much to disarm hostility, so that now children were brought to be treated for ailments, though this was not a medical mission, and the missionaries were much in request in cases of opium poisoning.

The Sunday was spent mostly in religious services, some of which were largely attended by Chinese. I heard two native laymen from other stations preach at considerable length and with striking fluency, and was afterwards "Chinchinned" by a throng of Chinese.

The town, with about 40,000 inhabitants, seemed not very flourishing. The chief export was that of hides. The walls were well kept, and afforded fine views of the surrounding scenery. The air was exceedingly moist, and the temperature varied little, being from 50° to 60° night and day. From Mr. Polhill I learned much concerning this district which, over a long tract circling from the north-west to the north-east, is described as very beautiful.

Having decided to descend the river for a day, and then to strike across the comparatively open country to Pau-ning, I applied to the Yamen for boats and a soldier guard, which were at once granted, the boats of course being paid for, the soldiers merely receiving a "cum-shaw," or gratuity.

CHAPTER XI.

SUI-TING TO PAU-NING.

In the morning (December 18) I had a hearty send-off by the Mission household whom I could not sufficiently thank for their cordial hospitality.

I had a large boat, about eight feet broad by 40 feet long, for myself and my immediate retinue, and the chairs and coolies were accommodated in two smaller boats. A steersman and five rowers formed the crew, and we carried, besides, the Captain's wife and baby. The boat had a low mat roof, with hanging sides of matting.

The river, about 100 yards wide, ran in long, quiet, deep stretches, clear rippling shallows, and small rapids, such as one sees in a salmon stream at home, and our craft in some places, though of light draught, dragged a little over the stones. The banks were well-defined, and there was nothing torrential in the character of the stream, which flowed in a narrow valley between low hills with an easy gradient. About 80 or 90 li below Sui-ting, at a little coal mining village, called Yen-tang-wang, the hills became steeper and higher, the right bank being generally the more open. We saw a good deal of boat traffic, the boats having balanced rudders. There were very few villages and no sign of a road.

Chinese roads seem to prefer cross-country work and mountain obstacles rather than the circuits of a river valley

Half-an-hour after we left Sui-ting the men had a meal of rice, flavoured with a little boiled cabbage, of which each despatched three or four good-sized bowlfuls. A quarter of an hour sufficed for the repast, and at 4.30 they had their second meal, of precisely the same character. In the intervening eight hours they had laboured at the oar unceasingly, save for brief " spell-ohs," in which their custom was to produce some rough leaf-tobacco from their pouches, roll it into loose cigars, a couple of inches long, stick them into the bowls of their pipes and smoke.

We tied up when it was getting dark, at Tu-shih-kai, about 140 li from Sui-ting, but we resumed our voyage before daylight, and next morning (December 19) about 6.30 reached San-hui (180 li from Sui-ting). This town stands on the right bank, 480 feet above sea-level, picturesquely situated at the confluence of the Sui-ting river (the Ku-ho) with the Pa-shui. On the opposite bank, facing the entrance of the Pa-shui, stood a rather gaudy temple in an admirable position from the geomantic point of view.

While we breakfasted a crowd gathered on the bank to watch the performance. At eight we landed, and I was carried in a chair through the town and on to the height, some 200 or 300 feet above the river. Our journey was now by land, and during the whole day we passed through a very remarkable bit of country, reminding me of the " *mauvaises terres* " of the United States. What had originally been a

plateau of sedimentary rock—sand, mixed with clay and a little marl—was eroded in every direction by the heavy rainfall of the Province. At short distances from each other stood many domes and truncated cones of harder rock, whose sides were stepped, owing partly to the horizontal formation, partly to terracing. Where the rock was more than usually hard, nullahs had occasionally formed. The disintegrated material forms a rich red loam, and the whole country was a perfect garden, the crops we saw being a little sugar-cane, poor and small of stick, much opium, and great quantities of winter wheat, beans, peas, vetches, carrots and turnips. The wheat was often sown in the Irish "lazy-bed" system, with an edging to the furrows of beans; oftener wheat and beans, and turnips also, were sown over the same bed, but not promiscuously—each leaving room to the others. There was no timber, and no great beauty in the landscape, but the many little, whitewashed, half-timbered farmhouses, set in clumps of bamboo and other trees, were pleasant to look at.

The road by turns rose and fell from 50 to 100 feet, until, after we had accomplished a longish march of 60 li, it fell to a level of 540 feet at the small town of Yen-feng-teh, which we reached at one o'clock, and where we had to wait half-an-hour for the baggage coolies to come up. Here coal, in large lumps, clean and good, was being brought in. We left again at 2.20, and the crowd both inside and outside the inn was so great and noisy that I had to take refuge in my chair. Ten or twelve li further, we crossed a small chain of fast-crumbling hills of the same formation, running south-east and north-

west at an elevation of nearly 1,000 feet, and we had a bird's-eye view of the fantastic scene we had been crossing. After another 35 li, we reached the market town of Pa-miao-chang, where the inn, though tolerably large in its restaurant part, had but one other room, small, poor, evil-smelling, in which I had to put up with Mr. Hsia and the servants. We had passed several fortified, but disused, posts on the tops of some of the higher crags, very strong and picturesque.

I found four soldiers of my new guard very noisy and rough to the wayfarers, but they seemed on the best of terms with one another.

Early next morning we had a spell of 25 li and then breakfasted at King-pien-si, a town standing on the bank of an unnavigable stream, and about 300 feet above its level. It was market day ; the place was crowded, and, for some time after leaving, we met streams of people pouring in. Market towns are numerous and well attended, the markets being held every fifth day.

The country was of the same character as that we had passed through the day before, but denudation had been more complete, so that the land was more undulating and rounded. At some distance to the left, parallel to our westerly course, ran a low range of sandstone hills, and, far off on the right, a small broken line of hills showed at times.

After a trudge of 50 long li over uninteresting country we reached the small town of Lu-shih-chiao (1,550 feet), where we stopped for lunch. The soldiers kept guard at the door of my room, but unfortunately there was a sort of window at the back—an open wood grating—where faces soon

appeared. When I hung towels across for a screen, an attempt was made to remove them by means of a bamboo, but, by a sudden strategic movement, I captured the bamboo and routed the enemy. The incident only showed the absence of the sense of rudeness and the disregard of another's privacy.

My soldiers trudged along stoutly all day, keeping up an incessant fire of talk, jokes, and laughter, besides exercising their lungs freely in clearing the way for our procession. Some men uncovered their heads as I passed, the first time I had seen such a thing in China. We were now on a main road, but it consisted simply of rough uneven slabs of stone and was not wide enough for two to walk abreast. There was thus the two-fold risk of stumbling and of stepping into the inundated fields. I asked why the fields were water-covered while lying fallow, and was told it was to soften the ground and to destroy the roots of the last crop. Flooding was in fact a substitute for ploughing, for which they have not the implements. It seemed a wonder that the soil was not soured.

We noticed an extraordinary number of little joss-houses and temples by the way, and one of the soldiers was particular to " chin-chin " as he walked past. In most of the tiny shrines were two figures ; a male, the god of earth, a rather jovial, benign-looking deity, and a female with a child on her lap. Besides these, there was sometimes the goddess of mercy, with a couple of child attendants. This was the women's deity. Often by some rest-house, or standing alone at some convenient or striking spot, grew a pine tree with long, dark, evergreen leaves, making a pleasant shade for wayfarers.

At 5.10 we reached Ying-shan-hsien, height 500 feet, an important walled town, where we found a fairly decent inn. I noticed that before every house and shop there was placed a tablet with joss-sticks and two lighted candles in front. This was an offering to the gods of fire, famine, and pestilence, whose festival it happened to be, and we met a small tag-rag procession coming down the street in their honour.

On December 21, after passing through country flatter than that we traversed the day before, and as uninteresting, halted at Sung-tang-si for breakfast. At noon we passed through a market town, Shii-kia-chang, crowded with people, through whom my chair coolies forced their way with much shouting and with no ceremony, so that, if any one failed to get out of the way of the poles, down he went. There were several people struggling on the ground at one point. Whether on foot or in a chair, the passage of these crowded places is always disagreeable. We did not stop for tiffin, but struck a little wayside inn, 8 li further on. At this point we got on to the foothills of a range which began to crowd on us, and in a short time we had climbed to the crest of one of the higher points, some 1,100 feet up.

These hills consist of rapidly decomposing sandstone, and though the upper parts are too steep to be terraced, their sides are deeply streaked by the denuding rains. Owing to the softness of the strata lying horizontally, the ranges run in no defined direction, but present a perfect maze of crests, spurs, ravines and basins, un-timbered save for the trees planted about the numerous farmhouses in the

hollows, or on the lower slopes. We passed several picturesque little hill-forts, and the road wound along at what seemed an unnecessary elevation, as easier levels followed the hill-shoulders round which we were working.

At 4 p.m. we reached a poor little village, where my soldiers wished to stop, for night fell at 5 o'clock, and the Chinese dislike travelling after dark. However I stalked on, and waited for Mr. Hsia to come up. An hour later we struck two miserable little inns, where the guest rooms, very small and dark, smelt as if they had been used for stables or worse. The coolies came up and vowed they couldn't and wouldn't go further. Mr. Hsia said that the proper place was 20 li off, and that the men could not carry their loads over such rough roads in the dark. Our new soldiers also—two wretched, opium-smoking, dirty specimens—declared they could not go on; they were evidently pining for their pipes. However I pushed on, followed by Mr. Hsia, the boy and cook, and after going some way, we asked at a house how far we were yet from our resting place. We were told the distance was 2 to 4 li; but, a few minutes later, a wayfarer raised it to 8 li. At the next house we were told 10 li, and that we had a "mountain" to cross. Not long after, a belated passenger informed us that we had 12 li to go. Mr. Hsia's voice came sadly out of the gloom, "Mr. Birch, I am sorry to have to inform you that I have just heard we have 12 li yet to go," at which I roared with laughter, the cook and the boy joining in most heartily, and the next moment I stumbled and came down, adding greatly to the merriment.

After all, "the mountain" did not prove very

formidable, and at about six o'clock we crossed it and came in sight of the lights of the town in the valley below. Arriving at a small inn which possessed a decent room, and finding that we were yet 8 li from the town, we decided to stay, and sent men back with lanterns to bring in the coolies, who, as we heard from one of the soldiers, had of course decided to come on.

The floor was actually paved, and, though the place was nothing better than a sort of barn, it was really quite *distingué* here. There were joss-sticks burning in front of a small and hideous image in a niche.

As we plunged into the mists of the valley next morning, I was glad we had not been obliged to make the descent in the darkness. After marching 8 li we reached the walls of the small town of Hsui-chun-pa, on the left bank of the Kia-ling, which runs down from Pau-ning and the mountains in the north. This is a noble stream to look at; clear water of turquoise blue, dashed with green, about 150 yards broad now in the dry season, but the gravel beaches widen out in places to three or four times that breadth.

We skirted the walls of the town to the ferry, and after a brief delay crossed over and walked 4 li to a tiny hamlet called Ti-tse-kon, where cook and coolies, boy, soldiers, other travellers and myself, breakfasted at a little rest-place. We left at 8.30 and after an uneventful and hilly walk of 50 li, came down once more to the fine blue stream, which had been describing horizontal curves, while we were accomplishing vertical ones.

At Wei-lung-si I saw and inspected the first of the

many brine wells we encountered during the day. A bore-hole is tediously made by dropping a heavy pointed bar and extracting the *débris* with iron pincers or tongs, worked by a cord. In this case the depth was about 450 feet. The bore-hole is lined at top with a bamboo tube, and within this a bamboo bucket about 30 feet long by 2½ exterior diameter is lowered by a bamboo plaited cord. This cord is wound over a drum of about six feet diameter, made out of a double spoked wheel, the spokes being connected together by cross bars about 30 inches apart.

The operator seats himself opposite the edge of the drum, and holding one of the cross bars with his hands, proceeds to revolve the wheels by a motion akin to climbing with his feet, using them alternately, but of course not altering his position otherwise. When the head of the bucket appears, he secures the wheel by means of a band brake, made of bamboo. He then goes round, and detaching the bucket from the cord, pulls it up, the end going up into a McKernock guide, fixed to a pole held vertically by rope guys. When clear of the tube, he holds it over a large bucket and lets the contents out by opening a valve in the bottom. In this way they get at intervals about six pairs of large pails of brine per day. The brine is of course river water, which has percolated into salt-bearing strata. It was muddy and not very salt to the taste. Later, I saw a large evaporating factory, with a store of excellent coal.

For a few li our course lay along the river and there were scores of these wheels amongst and above the boulders of the lower bank. Then we struck

inland, then back to near the river again, and at dark reached the town of Nan-pu, which is the centre of the salt trade.

The same formation is met with throughout; the road keeps along hill-shoulders and crests from 300 to 600 feet high, neglecting the valleys or rather horseshoe-shaped basins, due to the erosion of the hills, which run in all directions, defying one to take their bearings.

During the last two days we noticed no opium under cultivation, and (though this might be a mere coincidence) I was struck with the fine physique and looks of the population. We were now supposed to be in a silk district, but I observed very few mulberry trees.

On a large sand-and-shingle bank in mid-river, not more than 100 yards off, we saw hundreds of wild duck, the first I had seen in Szechwan, taking an afternoon siesta. I put my gun together, hoping that one of the boats which were passing close inshore would give me a cast across. My soldiers, the cook, boy, coolies and Mr. Hsia bawled themselves hoarse, but the boats kept stolidly on their way, for the Chinese habit is to have nothing to do with things which do not concern them.

Nan-pu in the dawn looked a poor, squalid place, and Lak-yia-yen, 20 li further on, where we breakfasted, was a wretched small town on the right bank and in the entering angle of the river, where it turned suddenly from east to south. On a gravel bar just above the angle, a number of wild duck were sunning and preening themselves.

Then we trudged for 50 long li, sometimes following the river, sometimes cutting across the bends

over low spurs. Level expanses of ground, well-cultivated and populous, shewed by well-defined banks the ancient bed of the river. Occasionally we saw salt wells; at our breakfasting place there were salt-boiling works. Batteries of small, shallow, circular iron pans were ranged above flues, under which coal fires were burning. As the brine became denser, it was ladled from the lower to the higher pans, and finally allowed to drain and crystallize into a good, clean, white salt. I was told that the coal was brought from a place four days' journey up the river. Mulberry trees were here more frequent, indicating silk-worm culture.

The same pyramidal formation with stepped sides prevailed, and the hills bordering on the river valley were pleasantly irregular. There was no timber, only clumps of bamboo and cypress and sometimes other trees at the farms and hamlets. The hill-sides were shaved bare for fuel, and even brushwood was allowed no chance of growth. Women and children went out on the hill-sides, with small sickles and bamboo rakes, and gathered the rough grass, dead leaves, and vegetable *débris*.

At one place we passed quite a Pantheon of Buddhas and gods and goddesses, enshrined in niches in the rock face, the figures gaudily painted and gilt and protected from the weather by wooden roofs and galleries.

At length we came in sight of a high hill, crowned with a tall pagoda, and then the town of Pau-ning-fu appeared. Up the river was a bridge of boats, but our soldiers and chair-coolies were tired, and we crossed by a boat below the town.

CHAPTER XII.

PAU-NING TO SUI-NING.

NEWS of the approach of a foreigner had reached the town, and on the beach we were met by a member of the Inland Mission, who, with cordial hospitality, conducted me to the Bishop's house, then occupied by Dr. and Mrs. Pruen (Bishop Cassels having gone to Shanghai), and for two delightful days (Sunday and Christmas) I was the guest of the Mission. I met nine of the members of this community (five of them being ladies), and there were present from the Shensi mission a couple who, known to each other long before their life in China, were married on Christmas.

After breakfast on Sunday we went to a short service in English at the little church, followed by a longer one in Chinese for the natives, who pretty well filled the place, women on one side, men on the other, with a long screen between them down the aisle. The service concluded with an exceedingly fluent discourse in Chinese by Dr. Pruen; the lessons for the day were read by natives. It was curious to hear well-known hymn-tunes sung by the Chinese, the effect, though hearty, being very harsh. On Christmas morning there was a short service at the

church in English, followed by the marriage service, then the Communion service, and then a service in Chinese.

The Mission was, at the time, in charge of Mr. Taylor, with whom and with Dr. Pruen I had much interesting conversation. I listened to details concerning the Chinese abuse of opium and of the ruin it works on the health and wealth of its victims. The general decline in prosperity was attributed to the increasing production of the drug and the consequent decrease in the production of food-stuffs. The consumption of the drug was ever extending; it began at an earlier age, and thus further reduced the working powers of both men and women. It was frequently used for the purpose of suicide, many women thus seeking vengeance on mothers-in-law, believing that, after death, their spirits would cause vexation to their tyrants. It was a curious instance of the frugal turn of mind of the Chinese that suicides were commonest at the time of the year when opium was cheapest—a few cash turned the scale.

Mr. Taylor had an opium refuge, where a cure was effected by giving pills, compounded partly of opium and partly of a counter-agent—alum largely—and also of tonics, the quantity of opium being gradually reduced.

Mr. Taylor showed me his collection of Chinese cash; the oldest of which dated back some 2,000 years B.C., but were of the same shape and size as those of to-day. The old coins, however, were much better and purer than those of our degenerate days. Curiously, the characters of the old cash were in Chinese and perfectly decipherable, while

the inscription on the modern cash was in Man-chu, undecipherable to the Man-chus themselves.

Dr. Pruen entertained me with his ingenious theory respecting pagodas, whose pedigree he had no difficulty in tracing back to the Tower of Babel.

The town of Pau-ning stands on a plain round which the river describes almost a complete circle, and which is encompassed with low hills. From the walls are obtained charming views. The climate was moist, and the air, though quite motionless, with the temperature between 50° and 60°, felt chill. In summer, I was told, the thermometer rose to 106° in the shade.

Here I noticed rough hedges of wild roses and a sort of wild lemon or lime, the fruit of which was bitter. Oranges grown here were juicy and fragrant, though slightly bitter; their exterior was rough.

In the morning of December 26 I made my adieux to my kind hosts, and went on my way refreshed in mind and body.

The route passed within a few li of Nan-pu. We walked 15 li to Hai-wang-miao, then 40 li to Hai-sui-tang, and 25 li more before we brought up at Fu-tsien-pu at 4.50 p.m. The three soldiers who were to have been our guard did not turn up at time of starting, but overtook us at the end of the day. I noticed very little opium growing.

The river makes a considerable bend to the east between Nan-pu and our next point, Shun-king, and our road followed the chord of the arc.

We had a fine though somewhat cloudy day, and we passed through Shi-lung-chang, Chang-kia-tien, and on to Yuen-feng-fu, 90 li in all, by 4.40. We

were to have stopped for tiffin at a little town named Ma-yeng-tang, but it was market-day, so, leaving most of the coolies there to get their rice, I pushed on over the mountains for another 10 li, in order to avoid the intrusion of the mob. The scenery was most characteristic of the geological formation, a confused mass of pyramidal hills or truncated cones, with regularly stepped sides; irregular basins, circular or elliptical; and numberless smaller eminences in the basins. There was no regularity in the direction of the hills; no definite water-shed, though doubtless it must be in a south and easterly direction towards the Pau-ning river (the Kia-ling).

The whole day the road went up and down at intervals, the altitude rising or falling 50 to 500 feet. It was oftener on the hills than in the valleys, and it took advantage of the steps provided by the horizontal formation. The scenery was neither grand nor beautiful, but pleasant, and rather more wooded, chiefly with cypress. Both hills and valleys were fully cultivated, and the crops were kept very clean. There was scarcely any opium, and the winter wheat, beans, and peas, looked forward and well. We met many porters, bearing cotton piece-goods of native make, and huge bales of the rush wick for oil lamps, which is produced near Shun-king.

On December 28 we stopped for breakfast at Lui-ling (15 li) on a bright and sunny morning, which turned into a lovely day. Another stage of 50 li brought us to Chin-chi-ho. After 20 li over broken but falling ground, the hills receded and we went on over fairly level ground.

Shortly before our mid-day halt, I met a lady member of the Inland Mission, on her way to Pau-ning, who hinted to me that I was expected at Shun-king, and, soon after tiffin, as I was doing the last 25 li, a messenger brought me a note from Mr. Evans, asking me to put up at the Mission.

Shun-king is an important walled town with 70,000 inhabitants on the steep right bank of the river. In the space between the city-wall and the river, we passed through a fine bazaar, a mile long, with shops full of good, and even handsome, wares.

Shun-king is anti-foreign, and, like other places, was a good deal stirred up by the Yuman-tsu trouble the year before. The French Mission had quitted the city, and for some weeks Mr. Evans was practically a prisoner in his house with a guard of 30 soldiers watching over him.

Mr. Evans struck me as being a shrewd man, and not so sanguine as most missionaries. He was by no means positive as to the good effects of the opium refuges; he spoke of cases in which Chinese, after years of abstinence and triumph over the habit, had again fallen; and he believed that their resisting power was small unless constantly supported. He estimated the opium-smokers in the district at about 40 per cent. of the males, and 25 per cent. of the females, and he thought that the habit was growing.

I had arranged for the city gates to be opened early next morning to let us out, but my coolies had an unusually comfortable inn, and they were an hour behind time in arriving. We crossed the river by a long timber bridge, used only at low water I fancy, and took boat for some 30 li to Ching-

tsü-ka. One end of this town touched the river at the landing, and a short walk of 10 or 15 minutes across the town brought us to the river-bank again, the river meantime having described a curve some 60 li long. I had intended to go another 30 li by boat, but the extortionate price of 1,200 cash (about 3 shillings) per boat, was demanded, so I decided to walk, and we followed the left bank down to Li-tu-ho, a market town, and there crossed over.

Except for the bend referred to, the course of the river runs pretty straight for the south, both above and below Ching-tsü-ka. Its valley is open from Pau-ning to Ho-chau. The true banks are well marked, and are from 600 to 1,200 yards apart. The blue-green stream runs in sluggish reaches, with occasional small, swift rapids, between large shingle beaches, on which, here and there, gold-washing was going on in a primitive style. The sand or shingle was shovelled into a rough basket; then it was shaken and thrown out by hand, the finer stuff being allowed, with the aid of a little water, to run over a wooden board with small riffles on it, containing no amalgam however; the catchment stuff was then panned and washed, and the result gave a small "colour." As this is done yearly, it is clear that gold is continually coming from somewhere up the river. On the shallows and shingle eddies were numerous flocks of wild duck, both widgeon, diving ducks, and a light-yellow, grey-necked species. I had three very long shots, but No. 5 shot, at over 50 yards, is not good enough for duck. We kept along the river for some distance, then across some undulations, and 40 li of this brought us to Nan-mi-chi, on the bank. This dirty little town of evil

repute was very crowded, and the people rather offensive. At one inn we were not allowed to stay; at the next we were more fortunate; but a large crowd assembled, and we had to wait over an hour, the coolies being tired and late in coming up. It was then six o'clock, and we had already come 100 li, very long ones, three to the mile; but I was anxious to push on, otherwise I could not reach Ho-chau in time to keep my rendezvous of the 31st with Matheson and Grant.

A plentiful supply of lanterns and candles was laid in, and we started at 6.30 for a tramp of 40 li in the dark, not at all easy over narrow, rough, stone causeways, three or four feet wide, with wet paddy-fields on either side. The day had been close and sultry, and I had felt off-colour, so for the first time I took refuge in my chair for an hour and a half. Then I got out and tramped, with eyes fixed on the heels of the lantern-bearing soldier in front, too dazzled to see anything else, and afraid of stepping off the narrow path. It took us five hours to do that 40 li; I felt ready to drop all the time; and the poor coolies were even worse off. At one place we had to cross a small river, spanned by a stone bridge, with a locked gate at either end, and no habitations near save the covering of the bridge itself. The bridge-keeper had to be awakened, and then had some difficulty with his keys; he seemed half stupid with opium. The closed bridge was regarded as a preventive against robber bands roaming the country.

It was after 11.0 p.m. when we reached Wan-tien-chang, our port of refuge, but at the gates we had difficulty in rousing another slave of the opium

lamp, and when we got to the inn at 11:30, we found it closed and quite full of guests. A regular pandemonium ensued; the soldiers banged on the barred doors, yelling at the top of their voices—and there is no voice to compare with that of a Chinaman for pure noise. The coolies shouted and raved too, while the head coolie danced about like a madman, foaming at the mouth, banging floor and furniture with a long bamboo, and abusing the inmates and the proprietor. Tired as I was, I took a chair and watched the strange performance. One room at the head of the inner hall, singled out for my occupation, was especially besieged. The men within, however, said little. The proprietor was brought to speak them smooth, but without effect. At last the head coolie, who had been getting more and more furious, suddenly rushed at the door with such force that the stout wooden bolt broke and the door flew open. Then ensued a dead silence, then polite and gently-spoken apologies for the strong measures which had been necessary, and then the gentlemen inside, four in number, who had been occupying the small room with two beds, gathered up their bedding, came forth smiling, were received in the most friendly way, and left me to be forthwith installed.

The noise and clamour had been dreadful and, as Mr. Hsia said, not quite the usual thing for private individuals; but then, we were high officials, travelling with an escort and retinue, and entitled to make any row and turn people out of their rooms in order to obtain accommodation. In fact I had seen a good deal of the sort before, though never in so noisy and aggressive a way.

After so heavy a day we were a little late next morning, not getting away from Wan-tien-chang till 7.20 a.m. We passed, during the day, Hsien-lung-chang, Ko-lu-chang, and on to Wu-chung-tang, 120 li altogether, by 6.30, well after dark.

Our way had been over a rather low-lying country but always broken and irregular. There was much cultivation of rice and wheat, but little of opium. We met many peasants going to market with small bundles of the long and tough peeled white pith of the rushes grown in this district. I saw some fields of the plant, which is cultivated in a regular way. Indigo is grown in this district. I saw none in cultivation, but porters carrying large pots of the dye were numerous. Here, as elsewhere, we often met men laden with jars of oil, either of rape seed, or of the oil-tree, which bears a fruit something like a chestnut, from which the oil is expressed, the rind being used for tanning.

A good many men were fishing in the shallow water of the paddy-fields where fish ova, brought from the river, had been placed, fields so treated being indicated by a stick with a bunch of straw on the end. The fisherman divests himself of apparel below the waist, and, armed with a mushroom-shaped basket, some 30 inches across, with a hole in the top and no bottom, wades in and sweeps the surface of the water in front of him with a 12 to 15 feet bamboo. The fish, which are very small, dart forward and bury themselves in the mud. The man promptly claps the basket over the spot, then gropes in the mud with his hands through the hole in the top.

In the deep banks of a fast-running stream, I saw a large and very lightly constructed wooden wheel, revolving by small square floats on the periphery. Fastened diagonally beside each float was a joint of bamboo, which, as the wheel dipped, was filled by the runnel which revolved it. When each bamboo reached the top, it discharged its contents into a wooden conduit carried out from the top of the bank, and so irrigated the fields beyond.

We struck camp at earliest dawn (December 31), and quickly getting over the 20 li, arrived at the outskirts of Ho-chau, which, from its position at the confluence of three rivers, is a very important place. Rain was falling, the thermometer stood at a little over 40°, and the passage through the dirty, wet streets in a chair was by no means agreeable. But Matheson and Grant had arrived, and we had a very pleasant meeting, breakfasting together and comparing notes and experiences.

They had arrived at Chung-king on the morning of the 24th, *i.e.*, 13 days after we had parted; and had had no misadventures, though the kwatzu had tested the strength of her planking against many rocks and reefs, and had broken her tracking line twice. It had taken them two days to come from Chung-king to Ho-chau by boat.

We were now a strong party, consisting of Matheson, Grant and self, Mr. Hsia (interpreter), two boys, two cooks, the head coolie, 20 chair coolies for eight chairs, 16 carrying coolies, a "ting-chai" for going on before and engaging rooms and reporting us to the magistrates at different towns on the way, six soldiers in blue, sent by the Chung-king authorities to go with us

all the way, and four soldiers in red, sent by the Ho-chau magistrate to see us to the next " hsien " ; in all, 56 persons.

The morning (January 1, 1900) was miserably dark, dreary and cold, with sleet falling and the paths were a mass of wet and greasy clay, over which our coolies slipped and stumbled. On the higher hills, the ground and roof-tops were just whitened with snow.

After passing over some low hills behind the town, we reached and crossed the Fau-kiang, which meets with the rivers from the Sui-ting and Pao-ning regions, at or near Ho-chau, and continues to Chung-king as the Kia-ling River. It is smaller than the others, has a swifter current and more regular fall, with the same clear water of a beautiful blue-green, and has the look of a fine salmon river in many places. It is navigable for junks of great length, but low and narrow and with very long raking counters.

We passed successively Pei-sa-pu on the right bank, Mo-ti-pu on the left bank, Hwei-to, a busy little market-town, picturesque outwardly, filthy at the kernel, and then, after a short march of 22 li, we arrived in the fast fading light of a cheerless winter evening at Ta-ho-pu, having travelled 69 li during the day.

This river valley was more open than the basins of the other rivers, the right bank, so far, being the easiest. But usually the bank against which the current chiefly strikes, is the steeper, and has often low cliffs of crumbling sandstone, at the base of which the path runs. We found the old formation prevailing.

Our course on January 2 lay over the river bed, which, though we had to cross the stream three times, proved easy marching ground. But the day was raw and rainy, and our progress was retarded by the dawdling coolies. About 3 o'clock we reached the crowded market-town of Tse-tung-tsien, from which we struck inland in the fast going light, and walked 20 very long li across a tangle of low hills on a villainous stone road to the little town of Sheng-kia-tsien, which lies about a mile from the river. In 1898, during the Yuman-tsu troubles, a band of outlaws and broken men came to the place, but the men of the district laid a trap for them. Having induced them to enter a temple in search of plunder, they fell on them and killed a score or so at the first onset, whereafter the rest fled.

Just outside Tse-tung-tsien the path led between the river and some low sandstone cliffs, the sides of which showed curious smooth conchoidal fractures from top to bottom, which, with the fantastic grouping of the cliffs themselves, made the spot rather noticeable. The Chinese, with that tendency to admire everything in Nature which is bizarre rather than beautiful, have distinguished the spot with several quaint and highly ornate temples and small pagodas, inscriptions on the rock faces in gigantic characters, gaudy images and shrines let into the stone, and with one temple more important than the others, at the back of which, against the rock, and possibly hewn out of it, is a colossal Buddha, gilt all over, some 40 feet in height.

We spent the night in a poor sort of inn, where, by putting straw on the floor to keep our feet off the damp earth, and by using a couple of charcoal

braziers to dry our clothes, we managed to diminish the discomfort.

Our next march lay for a time among hills and basins such as those with which we were already familiar, and from the railway point of view, heart-breaking, but, shortly before reaching Lung-fing-chwang, we came to a fine plain, through which the blue river meandered, while low hills on either side formed a pleasing framework. A walk of 20 li across the plain in a bright afternoon brought us at 5.40 to the town of Sui-ning with its 30,000 inhabitants.

Here we saw several wheelbarrows—the first wheeled vehicles we had seen in Szechwan. A late crop of ground nuts was being gathered in by the peasants, and a number of small black pigs, tethered to stakes, were burrowing for any which had been passed over. Close to the town I noticed a plum tree, covered with brilliant flame-coloured blossom.

Our inn, in spite of many imperfections, seemed quite a noble one, and our "ting-chai," when we entered, called attention to its magnificence with a most self-gratulatory air. "Just look at the sort of good thing I have provided you with."

Just as we were about to sup, an Englishman representing the Methodist Episcopal Mission entered, and having apologized for being unable to ask us to stay at his house, as it was in the workmen's hands, craved for news of the world. He was a man with an open mind, and told us the results of his experiences and inquiries. As to the opium question he found that in town five men and three women in every ten of each, smoked opium, and also many children under the age of 15 years; in the

country about one in ten; of travellers at inns, eight in ten; of soldiers, nine in ten. He had not observed that the use of the drug or its cultivation was on the increase. He was positive as to its harmfulness and much shocked at the frequency of suicide, due, as he thought, to the ease with which opium is obtained.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUI-NING TO CHENG-TU.

WHEN we left (January 4) at 6.50 the ground was just touched with hoar frost, and the succulent beans and tender young crops of other kinds were rather droopy, but the opium poppy (a good deal grown here, as well as cotton) seemed quite unaffected.

Our walk across a plain on the right bank of the river took us to Shi-chi-ho, whence we crossed the river and walked, usually either on its bed or bank, to Ching-ti-tu, and then to Yang-chi-tsien, where we had trouble with our coolies and, as snow was falling, found it necessary to remain the whole of the next day. I threatened pains and penalties to the dilatory and disobedient; and though they made signs of submission, it seemed to me surprising that we could carry things with so high a hand, since we were in fact at the mercy of these people.

Yang-chi-tsien is a busy little market place, with a population of from 3,000 to 4,000. In the neighbourhood were extensive salt wells, and we saw strings of coolies carrying salt. We visited salt reduction works where it took three tons of coal to produce one ton of salt. The coal, brought about 150 miles from below Ho-chau, cost no less than

38 shillings per ton, though the transport was by water. The reduction pans, made of cast iron, very flat and about three feet diameter, averaging ¾-inch thick, were brought from some point beyond Chung-king, we were told, costing about 9 shillings per cwt., but they last only about 15 days, being rapidly corroded by the hot brine. The product was much discoloured by the iron oxide which caked on the underside of the very close-grained cakes of salt. There were said to be from 7,000 to 8,000 wells in the vicinity, each producing on an average some 70 or 80 catties of brine, giving 10 catties of salt. Besides the small quantity which goes away by land, about 2,800 chang* (say about 12,000 tons per annum) are sent to Chung-king by water for re-shipment down the Yangtsze. This estimate is a somewhat loose one, however, Chinese information being not very precise.

The Chinese have many repellent qualities, such as their filthiness, their disregard of decency, their boorishness and inquisitiveness, to say nothing of their incessant and noisy talk; but they also have many admirable qualities and their character presents many curious inconsistencies. They have a remarkable mechanical aptitude, with delicacy of touch, and a patience probably unrivalled in the world. Their numerous contrivances attest this, and one sees on all sides the prototypes of recent European inventions and methods. But they seem incapable of drawing the necessary inferences and of improving and inventing as they proceed. They are intensely practical, and dislike to do anything for

* 1 chang = 36½ pao or baskets; 1 pao = 200 catties; 1 catty = 1⅓ or 1⅓ lbs. English.

which they see no necessity, yet they impose on themselves the most grinding and unnecessary labour. A mere tithe of the labour spent in transporting products on men's backs, if used in making roads on which wheeled vehicles could travel, would effect immense saving. How can one account for a people wearing cotton clothing, especially in the north, where cotton does not grow, where the winter is bitter, and where they have sheep and camels to give them wool? Or for the non-use of milk, which almost all other countries value, and which the Mongol and Tibetan tribes on the Chinese frontier use largely? Yet of other products there is hardly one in the shape of food which the Chinaman will not use, and his hatred of waste makes him utilise everything, whether animal or vegetable. Even the perusal of a book so explanatory and sympathetic as "The Real Chinaman" does not help one to account for the Chinaman as one finds him.

Setting out before day-light we travelled all day (January 6) on the level, either on the river bank or else on the plain which the river had formed. The formation showed signs of changing, still sandstone and horizontal, but the valleys were more defined, the hills more regular and the summits more rounded; a pleasant relief to the eye. The vegetation, too, was slightly different. There were more ferns and tall grasses, and larger cypresses, but the hillsides were very bare, and, owing to their steepness, less terraced. We saw little opium poppy, but many mulberry trees, and much evidence of a large cotton growth.

Crossing to the right bank, we came to a

large walled town, called Tai-ho-chen, for miles on each side of which the road was thronged with peasantry and porters going in to the market. They carried poultry, eggs, vegetables, raw cotton, cotton seed, timber for fuel, bundles of the dry cotton plant and of reeds and coarse grasses for fuel, besides straw, bamboos, oil, grain, and other things. This city has a population of 40,000, and was so crowded in consequence of the market that our chair coolies decided to go round the walls rather than across the town.

Salt wells were common all the way from our starting-point, and there was evidently a considerable trade with Chung-king and Cheng-tu, salt, opium, raw cotton and silk being exchanged for silk and cotton piece-goods. The river now became less navigable, with more frequent rapids and a narrower channel. It was most enticing with its beautiful blue water and fine runs.

In the keen, raw air one was constantly wanting hot food. A bowl of hot rice with a little butter, pepper and salt, was always acceptable, and our coolies seemed to think so too, for they halted every three miles or so to refresh themselves. I noticed one to-day polish off a bowl of rice with some pickled cabbage and other condiments, for which he paid the sum of four cash, about half-a-farthing, though rice was very scarce and dear.

We had trouble again with our coolies who refused to go more than 70 li for the day, so, making up my mind to complain to the magistrate at Tung-chwan, I turned in for the night. The inn was a small one, and though it would compare ill with one of the worst in England it shewed more effort towards

neatness and comfort than I had before seen in China, and the landlord was a decent old body. We made him very happy with the present of an empty biscuit tin, after which he could not do enough to stop up cracks and generally make the place more habitable.

Next morning, though snow was falling lightly, we had a trudge of nearly two and a half hours on an empty stomach before reaching Yang-chia-pa, and our breakfast. Then the snow ceased, sombre cypresses on the hill-side loomed through the grey air, dark green against the red-brown of the hills; mulberry trees and bamboos formed a foreground, and there were visions beyond of faint blue jutting hill-shoulders; on our right and below us the green-blue river ran with many rapids.

We walked on to Tung-chwan-fu through pleasant scenery, and for the most part over the river plain or on paths along and above the stream, sometimes by brief, steep ascents of stone steps over a bluff or spur running down to the river. From the last of these we looked down over a pleasant plain, surrounded with hills. In the centre lay the great walled town with its pagodas, temples, brown roofs and whitewashed gables, shaded with trees, while from the plain just behind rose a long detached rock, a little Acropolis, crowned with a dark-green cypress grove, within which doubtless there was a temple. On heights by the river above and below the town stood two tall pagodas.

We entered the town at 1.40, but it was almost two hours later when our coolies came up with our baggage.

We were accommodated in quite a high-toned

inn, and occupied the rooms reserved for rank, but the floors were ricketty with gaping cracks and rat-holes; the walls showed openings to the sky, and the doors fitted loosely.

I sent to the Yamen, asking for an interview with the magistrate, but was very disagreeably surprised to find that both he and the prefect had gone to the large town we had passed the day before in order to greet some important mandarin. So the head coolie still had the better of us. Considering the inclemency of the weather and the perversity of the coolies it seemed advisable to abandon the idea of pushing on up this valley to Lung-ngan at the north of the Province, and to go straight across to Cheng-tu.

The population of Tung-chwang is from 40,000 to 50,000.

Next morning (January 8) we turned westwards along a road about eight feet wide, but miserably bad in many places, never good at the best, and the sun struggled in vain to peep through the cloudy skies for which the Province is noted.

Our half-dozen blue-coated soldiers from Chung-king were good, sizeable fellows, well-clad and cleanly, taking some pride in themselves, and not opium smokers. The provincial soldiers, however, or rather Yamen runners (or thief-takers and messengers), who were attached to us for a few stages from town to town, were a wretched lot generally.

Here we had four yellow-coated roughs, who made so much disturbance, driving off and striking the other passengers and coolies, that we had to check them.

We breakfasted at a small market town called Lu-ngan-pu, had lunch at Tsai-ling-yi, and by 4.20 had accomplished the 100 li to Wei-sui-pu. The coolies, for reasons best known to themselves, marched gaily over the most hilly road we had had since leaving Ho-chau, and arrived almost with us.

Although the road was up-and-down, the valleys were really very regular and easy in their gradients. The formation reverted to the old one, but the sandstone was less red and the soil poorer; the country less populous and the low hills less terraced. There was very little timber and hardly any undergrowth, the country everywhere being shaved bare for firing—a penny-wise, pound-foolish policy. The crops were less forward too; there was hardly any opium, but a good deal of the mulberry tree.

We did not see the affluent which joins the main river at Tung-chwan, though we were travelling close to it, on its north side, the whole day. We were no further to follow the main or direct road to Cheng-tu which here crosses to the south of the river, but were taking a rather longer and more northerly course viâ Chung-kiang, so as to strike the large Cheng-tu plain at Han and so see something of the flat country.

We saw in the morning a great many porters carrying salt for Cheng-tu, staggering along under very heavy loads. The broken pieces of the salt cake, some three or four inches thick, were carried merely in shallow baskets, suspended to bamboos, exposed to the damp air and rain, to the mud or dust kicked up; yet the edges of the cake were

carefully painted with red "hong" marks, to prevent any from being removed on the road. The habit of disregarding dirt and filth is deeply ingrained in the Chinese. In the Straits Settlements, in Java, and in Siam, also in the Hawaian Islands, where the Chinese earn far more than they do in their own country, they retain their own piggish ways, though surrounded by native races far inferior to them in intelligence and industry, but possessed of far higher ideas of decency and cleanliness. Even in the Western States of America, where their earnings are large, the great objection to their presence is their non-amenability to sanitation and want of personal cleanliness. I believe the case is the same in the Australian Colonies. For myself I dislike to have anything belonging to me touched by Chinese; I feel a kind of qualmishness at eating food prepared by them, a feeling which has to be overcome by hunger. I feel as if even my boots were polluted by walking through their towns and villages, and as if I ought to be constantly washing my hands.

Throughout this Province the great quantity of meat exposed for sale in all the towns and villages is remarkable, and very different from the supply in North China. Pork is of course most in evidence, but beef, mutton and excellent goat and buffalo-flesh are common, as well as poultry. Butchers' shops and the carcases of animals, never a pleasing sight, and far too obtrusive even in civilized countries, are sickening objects here, to which I have to close my eyes. We noticed a large flock of sheep of two sorts, the smaller were black and the rams had the usual curling horns; the white sheep were

large, with longish faces and handsome spiral horns, like those of antelopes.

The only wild animal I saw in Szechwan, after a month's walking in the country, was a hare chased across the fields by a dog. The day before, we met a party of five or six sportsmen, with a number of mongrel dogs, who were after hares, we were told. Their guns were enormously long and the butts pistol-shaped; the whole of the action parts were of wire, Grant said, and the discharge was caused by a match smouldering on the hammer, which was driven on to the touch-hole and priming-pan by the release of the trigger.

We passed two herds of small cattle driven to a distant town for sale; on the feet of each animal were straw travelling shoes, a necessary precaution on such stony roads, and the drover carried on his back a sack of spare shoes.

We struck the river immediately on leaving the town (January 9) and had a broad easy road on even ground for the 20 rather long li to Chung-kiang. Just outside the town was a beautiful old bridge with four pointed arches. The town seemed to have many substantial, though not showy, shops and warehouses, and also a considerable market. On leaving, we met streams of peasants winding along the hilly paths, carrying firewood, charcoal and other fuel, pigs, poultry, rabbits, grain, small trees, and other products. The men carrying firewood only got three cash a catty for it, and as they carried 80 catties, the value of their day's work in cutting, carrying in, selling and returning only came to 240 cash, say about 7½d. During the day we

met many carrying indigo, and passed others laden with fine macaroni, salt, etc.

The ground rose soon after we left Chung-kiang and we soon reached the top of a hill of 700 feet, from which we saw innumerable small detached hills and hillocks dotting the plain below. From the summit the road dropped to a clear stream, running against us in a deep and rather pretty valley where the cypresses began to be numerous. Then the road ascended, sometimes steeply, and wound along, skirting hill shoulders, till we reached Tso-ma-pu, a village picturesquely placed on the saddle of the hill, 40 li from our breakfast place. The air was keen on these hills, some 2,500 feet above the plain, and, as snow had already fallen and the sky was threatening, we pushed on fast over the still rising ground along a good road and reached Ko-tien in one and a half hours. Here our "ting-chai," who had preceded us as usual, came out from an inn and tried to persuade me to remain, but I went on at a good round pace, reaching the foot of the hill by five o'clock, when I found myself on the famous Cheng-tu plain and within an easy mile of Lien-shan. Ten minutes after, Matheson and Grant came in, and three hours later the carrier coolies arrived, in very bad temper, having no doubt taken it easily to Ko-tien, making sure of finding us there, and then, after all, having to come on in the dark.

We lodged in a miserable inn with damp clay floors, and windows devoid of paper covering. It took over an hour to get charcoal and small earthenware pans to put it into. It really is astonishing how little these people regard the merest approach to comfort.

In the morning (January 10) there was hoar frost on the ground, but, as the day advanced, the haze lifted and it became pleasantly warm and sunny, getting overcast, however, in the afternoon. We stepped out over a road, which, for a mile or two, was not unlike a country lane at home as regards width and solidity, being macadamised after a fashion with small unbroken shingle from the neighbouring stream-beds—the best road that I had yet seen in China.

We were now well advanced on the great Cheng-tu plain, where the ground was suitable for wheeled traffic, the common vehicles being small wheelbarrows, used for carrying both merchandise and people. The un-greased wooden wheels of the barrows made a terribly sharp squeaking and squealing, the barrow-man considering this sound as rather companionable and exhilarating. The North China wheelbarrow has a large-diameter wheel, the upper part being cased in, and has places for passengers or load set longitudinally on each side, thus carrying the load high off the ground, and enabling a much larger one to be taken, but these had a small-diameter wheel at the fore-end of the barrow, the body of which resembled that of our own wheelbarrow. Passengers, therefore, had to sit with their knees hunched up, in a very lowly, undignified, and uncomfortable position. Occasionally we met small trains of pack-oxen or small ponies, but the bulk of the merchandise was taken by the barrow and by the bamboo pole across the shoulders.

Han-chau, where we breakfasted, is a large walled town with a great number of richly carved sandstone paitans at and near its entrances, their effect being

much spoiled by their sameness and frequency, some being but a few yards apart. Flowing through the town is a stream spanned by a long and wide stone bridge, entirely covered in and floored with strong boards, a very substantial, and well-kept-up structure. Wheelbarrows are not allowed to be used on this or on a similar bridge, further on, as the sharp-edged wheels would soon destroy the planking. They were therefore lifted and carried bodily across by three or four coolies. Along the sides, hawkers and pedlars had spread their wares, making a market-place of the bridge.

As we proceeded we saw numerous large villages and small towns, the plain being most populous, and on market-days the stream of traffic was immense. The crops were not nearly so forward as in the districts we had passed through, even the winter wheat not being so well up. The soil was somewhat poorer, of a more alluvial character and more mixed with sand and marl than the rich deep-red decomposed clayey sandstone of the mountain ranges we had come through, where we had seen beans in flower, rape about to flower, the winter wheat nearly a foot high, and the immense variety of cabbages and turnips in a very forward state, much of them ready for use.

Everywhere in the land was the sound of running water, the plain being very thoroughly and ingeniously irrigated with streams diverted from the main rivers and sending off innumerable runnels and canals.

In many places we saw the farmers beating the withering leaves off the mulberry trees and collecting them for fuel. Charcoal of a curious and very

tindery kind was used, made, I fancy, from wood burnt in only partly closed receptacles. In the towns were coal stores and a great quantity of very large coke, which must have been made in good-sized ovens; some very clean, bright and heavy, but not at all regular. This came, we heard, from Kia-ting on the Min river and from a place called Kwan-hsien, to the west of Cheng-tu, the point where a river emerging from the mountains is artificially divided into eleven streams for the purpose of irrigating the plain.

It was a long stretch of 50 li to our next halt at the considerable town of Hsin-tu, and after that we entered on the final struggle of 40 li to Cheng-tu the capital, making 120 li for the day, or about 35 miles in all. We were getting rather tired, but so long as it was light we jogged along merrily enough. Darkness fell towards six o'clock, when we were about halfway, but a young moon lit up the horribly rough paved causeway. The suburban villages became more and more numerous, and at last we entered the long street approach to the gate, oppressed by an all-pervading stink with which at every few steps a various odour was united. We strode on hopefully, but after going quite ten li we were met by our "ting-chai," who told us that the gates were shut and that he had engaged rooms at an inn, which proved to be really quite a decent place compared with most we had been at. Then we had to wait—wait for everything—but at length, one by one, the coolies began to turn up—first the chair coolies and chairs; then those who carried the precious baskets of food in use, pots, pans, and plates; lastly those with beds and bedding, stores, etc.; but it was well

after eleven before all were there, and near midnight before we could get to roost.

I should mention that, during the day, we met a party of Chinese sportsmen with a retinue going out hawking, with all the apparatus of poles, hoods, lures, etc., and two very large, handsome, well-plumaged falcons.

I several times saw in cages the common blue jay of Europe and also a bird the colour and size of our blackbird, but with bill of a whitish yellow. These I had frequently seen also in the wild state ; in their habit of flying short distances from thicket to thicket and in the manner of flight the resemblance to ours was close. Thrushes in cages were also seen, and these, when wild, I heard singing very sweetly, but not so persistently as the thrush with us. A small brightly-plumaged kingfisher was very common by streams and even in the paddy fields, finding a hiding-place in low banks. By the rivers were often seen a black ouzel with a good deal of dusky red on the back, and a singularly handsome white-capped bird with black and blue plumage and warm Indian-red, very broad tail coverts, which he opened and shut fanwise on alighting. Sparrows were numerous everywhere ; also crows, both black and white throated, and many parts of the country seemed a perfect paradise for magpies. Turkey buzzards were also plentiful. Of small birds there was no great show either in numbers or variety at this time of the year. There was not much cover for them, and those seen were shy and difficult to identify. Once we noticed a little fellow very like a robin in his manners, and with a small red patch just under the throat ; we saw a few fly-catchers

also. Pied wagtails were to be seen everywhere, but with much more white about them than those at home.

In Cheng-tu there were plenty of pheasants in the good shops, both the ordinary type and golden pheasant. Occasionally, the beautiful Amherst and Reeves pheasants are to be had, I believe, but in Szechwan, except in the wooded mountain districts of the northern part, they are not common. In Shan-si, Shen-si and Kan-su they are plentiful enough, I was told. A limited number of pretty doves were noticeable in the districts I passed through, and in one place I saw a fair supply of blue-rocks. Everywhere we were struck with the extreme brilliancy of the plumage of the birds, which were certainly in the perfection of feather at this season.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHENG-TU.

In the morning (January 11) we did not turn out or get under way very early, but eventually arrived at the hostelry of Kao-shêng (which means "high promotion"), in the street called "Cotton," presumably devoted principally to the dealers in that article. The approach through the North Gate was very squalid and crowded, so that, despite the cold, one was fain to take refuge in the chair. As we proceeded the town became a few degrees cleaner, and many degrees more interesting, the shops being good and showing every sign of prosperity.

The streets are from 8 to 12 feet broad, devoid of side walks, not convenient for traffic, still less for wandering and loitering in, although very interesting with their life and bustle. Blue-robed, cotton-clad, wadded-garmented pedestrians crowd the stone causeway, which rises to its centre and is usually very unequally laid, with many a projecting stone edge, deep crack, and noisome puddle. Every now and again one encounters small groups of red-coated and gowned Tibetan lamas, tall and dark-complexioned, with woollen wraps round their legs

and ankles, who come down into Szechwan on pilgrimage to the temples and monasteries. To them the capital with its population of 500,000 is a marvel of greatness and beauty, and they loaf about with staring eyes.

Jostling the pedestrians are numerous coolies with baskets and jars slung over their shoulders, shambling along, taking up much room, and uttering uncouth cries to warn the passers-by to make way. Many of them are water-carriers, whose brimful buckets, notwithstanding the floating piece of wood on the top, slop over on the pavement or on other pedestrians' legs.

Rickshas, clumsy and dirty, add to the throng, and the sound of bells frequently announces the passage of gaily caparisoned little ponies, with rather pretty heads and rough coats. If the riders are on a journey they wear fur coats, huge horn spectacles and a gay hood of red cloth, blue lined, which hangs over neck and ears and is tied under the chin. Now and then loud shouts announce a passing mandarin, be-robed and be-tasselled, with his cap and button, sitting in his state chair, generally a handsome and heavy structure carried on poles at a very rapid pace by a number of bearers His soldier-guard, with red jackets, march in front, clearing the way and carrying state umbrellas, halberds, tridents, spears, and other uncouth weapons.

The pedestrian has carefully to avoid the sedan chairs, which, carried by two or three coolies, pass along at a quick pace, the men uttering loud cries of warning, after which it is no affair of theirs if he gets hit or is shouldered reeling to one side. Add

to all this that the Chinese voice is neither musical nor soft, that a man speaks to you a yard off as if he were talking to you across a river, that the air is full of the cries of itinerant pedlars, vending their wares or using the curious wooden and metal rattles, which indicate particular trades, and occasionally of street-singers and story-tellers, or beggars asking

A STREET IN CHENG-TU.

alms, and you have some idea of the unregulated noise, bustle, and traffic of a street in a Chinese town.

Our rooms, being the principal ones, were at the very back of the inn at the end farthest from the street, and had a little courtyard all to themselves. It was the most splendid place we had occupied and a long way the most comfortable. The floor, though never washed and apparently never swept,

was fairly sound. The wall had paper all over, tolerably discoloured and dirty, it is true, but the cracks and torn places were patched with new paper. The paper coverings of the windows was intact and clean, and the place was fairly light. The beds, that is to say, the wooden frames on which the straw pallets reposed, were of stained wood and had ornamental wood canopies, on which rested the dust of ages. The tables and chairs, of hard dark wood, were in good order and rested firmly on their feet and the doors did exclude the air. With special gratitude we found that we were removed from sight and sound of the street and of prying curiosity, having the place absolutely to ourselves. And lastly, though we did not use them, in the cold open room beyond were coarse, red cloth cushions on the dais or divan which occupied the place of honour.

When we were settled at the inn we paid off our "Fu-to," or head coolie, giving him no "cum-sha," and only bestowing one on each of the coolies who had behaved best. The old rogue, however, had the advantage of us after all, for we made an error in his favour of several thousand cash.

It is easy to make errors where the currency is so complicated. The coin of the country consists of copper cash, which it is of course impossible to carry about with one. The method is to buy Chung-king silver "dings" at Chung-king, giving cheques on Shanghai. Each "ding" contains roughly about 10 oz. avoirdupois, or say 30 shillings (a Chung-king tael equalling 1 oz.), but the Chung-king tael does not correspond with the Shanghai tael or with any other of the numerous kinds of

tael in use in China, so that at every exchange a more or less intricate calculation has to be entered into, which invariably gives something to the other side.

One has next to go to the cash shop and buy cash, and then comes a wrangle as to the weight and "touch" or quality of the silver, in spite of the fact that the Chung-king "dings" are stamped and are supposed to be accurate both in weight and "touch." In most towns there are Government establishments where the silver may be weighed and a certificate given for a small fee, but imagine the trouble and bother incurred over every transaction.

Then, as between one town or village and another, the number of cash to the tael varies; in all places the number of cash to the tael is variable from day to day, and the copper cash themselves vary in size and value. Of course so cumbrous a system has attracted a large class who subsist by it, and has thus created vested interests and a strong disposition to uphold the "status quo."

In Cheng-tu there were three Protestant missions, to the kindness and hospitality of whose members, including seven or eight ladies, I was deeply indebted. All of them were interested in their work, and laboured for the social and moral improvement of the people. As one gets to know the missionaries, one cannot but be aware of their feeling that for all their sowing, their harvest is small among a people like the Chinese. Many of them almost openly admit, that until there is an amelioration in material condition little can be done morally. The deep poverty of the bulk of the people; the absolute indifference of the higher classes to the state of the

lower; and the absence of the common decencies of life, are serious obstacles to moral improvement. Besides, the Christian doctrine taught by the Protestant missions strikes directly at the root of the Chinese family, social and political system, viz., ancestral worship.

The Roman Catholics, I was told, make their teaching harmonize with this, and experience not one-tenth of the difficulty which other missions have to encounter. Moreover, the worship of the Virgin and the invocation of Saints, with the use of images, appeal to the idol worshippers. The women in particular have no difficulty in transferring their affections from the "woman's god," represented by a female image with a bambino on the lap, to that of the Virgin Mary, and in fact continue to use the same image in their worship.

Connected with the Canadian mission was a hospital, over which Dr. Ewan took me. It contained dispensaries, operating-room, offices, and clean bright wards for 30 or 40 men or women, and a few small rooms for better-class patients. The Chinese New-Year begins on our 31st January, and, naturally, at that season the number of patients in hospital was small, for, to say nothing of the Chinese fancy that if they pass the turn of the year in hospital they will pass the whole year there, they had the wish to partake in the universal festivities, pay the regulation visits of ceremony and friendship, and receive and pay off all such debts as are obligatory at the season.

The doctor was sometimes called to see well-to-do outside patients. If his treatment caused an improvement, he was not required, and not sent for

again. If the patient got worse, it was taken as a sign that the European treatment was of no use, and in this case also he was not recalled. As a rule his services were not requested until the Chinese doctors had had their innings and had failed, and the disease therefore was in an advanced and dangerous stage. These statements Dr. Ewan illustrated by referring to recent cases of diphtheria, which was spreading among the Chinese.

This Mission had also an hospital, not yet in use, for women, under a lady, Dr. Killam, and connected with it were an orphanage for destitute and castaway children and a school for poor girls, who came quite young and remained till the age of seventeen or eighteen, when they were returned to their parents. The feet of these children were not bound, a fact of which they were clearly ashamed when any Chinese lady visited the place. The mission had about 130 subscribers to a monthly magazine published in Chinese at Shanghai, dealing with foreign affairs and foreign literature and science. One day I met one of its members, Dr. Smith, selling books in the street. He was carrying on an animated argument with a young Chinaman, who tried to persuade him that he ought to give away the books and so "gain merit"; while the Doctor was asseverating that he was not there to gain merit for himself, but to sell books and do other things for the good of the Chinese, for which they ought to be glad to pay. He was successful to the extent of selling a book, but my presence interrupted the argument, which had greatly interested the circle of bystanders. The missionaries sell their books rather under cost price, but still on

the principle that what a man pays something for he values more than if it cost him nothing.

The bargain struck, the Doctor came to my room and drank tea and spent an hour in talk. He had something to say about the cruelties practised by not a few Chinese mistresses on their slave girls, poor little creatures sold by indigent parents, from six to twelve years of age, into unconditional servitude. Of course they are often well-treated, but not unfrequently they are beaten within an inch of their lives; or strung up by the thumbs to rafters; or seared with red-hot irons; or punctured with opium needles, which cause severe inflammation; suicide is therefore common, and I heard at the Ladies' Hospital that many are brought there in a dying condition or dangerously ill from the injuries inflicted.

The American Methodist Mission had a store for sale of Chinese translations of religious and technical works. They sold also medicines, and, curiously enough, a large quantity of photographic apparatus and chemicals. Quite recently they had sold to the son of the Viceroy a camera costing nearly £20.

Among the missionaries I met Mr. Ferguson, who seemed connected both with the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society. For five years he had been travelling in the remotest parts of China, and he had many strange adventures to record. He had several times been chased and caught by mounted robbers, had been stoned, and beaten, and shot through the hand, and had several times saved his life by threatening to use the revolver which he carried and for which

the brigands had a wholesome respect. On one occasion, when the weapon was produced, the robber band restored his horses, formed up in ceremonial order, and kowtowed to him and his party as they rode away.

One afternoon we visited the Arsenal in the south-east corner of the town, and were very courteously taken over the establishment by the Director, a Chinese, recently appointed from the southern Arsenal at Tientsin. It is entirely under Chinese control. From 400 to 500 men and boys were employed at wages from 80 cash per day up to one tael (for the exceptionally skilled), working 11 or 12 hours a day with three intervals for meals, which are supplied to them. The Director said that the place was very ill-organised when he arrived, a year ago, and that he was experiencing much difficulty in straightening things. There was a fine range of shops in good solid buildings, but so dark that it must have been hard for the men at the machines to see to do their work properly. A great deal of the machinery, not very new nor in good order, was from Birmingham, and they had themselves made rather rough replicas in many instances. Much labour was spent in the making of large breech-loading jingals, too heavy and cumbrous to be used except by two men over a rest or as a wall-piece, the rifle barrel being inordinately long, and carrying a cartridge of about the size of a 12-bore shot gun. The brass shells for this weapon were being made in considerable numbers, as also plain lead bullets, which were cast in hand-moulds on the old plan, the rough edges being afterwards trimmed with Chinese scissors, or rather hand-shears,

a system not conducive to accuracy. We saw, too, many light muzzle-loaders in course of construction, and the Director told us that they had to fabricate no less than 22 different kinds of arms and ammunition for the troops in the Provinces! We were shown a replica of a Colt repeating gun, firing 500 small-bore cartridges per minute. The original had been bought and taken to pieces; working drawings had then been made, and the copy constructed, speaking volumes for the imitative faculty possessed by the Chinese. It is not likely, however, that, for the parts taking severe strain and wear and tear, they would use steel of the different degrees of requisite hardness and suitability, and as the heat generated during rapid firing is very trying for the mechanism, their substitute for the proper material would not probably stand the strain.

The copper used in the Arsenal in considerable quantity is of good quality, and is produced in the Province—principally at the mines in the south-west, near Ning-yuan. The coke, which also seems good, though rather variable, comes from Kwan-hsien on the west side of the Cheng-tu plain.

In one department was the minting plant imported a year or two before from America. It had been started and shown to be in working order, but had not since been used. It was said that the new treasurer intended soon to restart it.

From the Arsenal we went to the Mathematical College hard by, where a number of young Chinese were learning English, there being a great desire generally to acquire that tongue. In this, as in other things, such as the increasing sale of scientific

publications in the Chinese tongue, there are signs that the leaven is working. The youths appeared rather shy of airing their English. One or two were willing to talk, but their remarks were phrases such as "How old are you?" and the like. Some of the young men looked very intelligent. It is not easy to obtain admittance to the College, and the students work hard, those from the country being boarded on the premises. Next to the College is another and smaller school for teaching higher mathematics, the Director of which, who spoke Chinese only, appeared to be a very intelligent man. Many of the young men evidently think that a new era is approaching, and are anxious to be in a position to take advantage of it.

We walked back to our hostelry along the top of the wall, which, though not nearly so lofty as that of Peking, is wide enough to allow three carriages at least to go abreast. It is neatly paved with large flat bricks and is kept in beautiful order, the only city wall that I have seen so kept, both the present and the previous Viceroy having been very particular to have the wall in fine condition. In the north-east corner of the wall are military camps, with a large, turf-clad parade ground.

There was a great laugh over a little experience we had in the morning. We had paused before a fruit stall, and when Matheson asked the name of a basket of small fruit resembling an olive (it was an olive in fact), the proprietor, in the quickest, readiest way, but in a decidedly impertinent tone, answered instantly, "San yang-kwai-tse," which being translated means "Three foreign devils." The crowd around broke into a laugh, but it was

not till we had gone some distance that Matheson realized the true meaning, and then it was too late to take the gentleman to task and make him apologize. Owing to the Szechwan pronunciation he thought at first that the words meant "a product of the country."

In the afternoon of January 13, I went over to the American mission, where Mrs. Cody had kindly promised to assist me in the purchase of some of the silks for which this town is famous, and for which she had educated one or two dealers into taking, without too much palaver, reasonable prices. A couple of hours passed rapidly while we inspected the pieces brought—soft, creamy, self-coloured pongees and beautiful crapes soft as a baby's skin, and crinkled like the skin of boiled milk, and white as driven snow; similar delicate silks into which pretty patterns were interwoven, and luscious satins, or stately brocades, ranging from pale yellow and faint delicate pinks to rich warm reds and bright gold and old-gold, pale blues and brilliant blues, lovely dark blues, indescribable purple-browns, apple-greens of the most approved "greenery-yallery" tints, and so on. It took all the sternness and indifference of even an unbelieving heathen like myself to make a selection, but appreciative creatures of the divine sex would have broken their hearts over the limitations of time and expense in making a choice.

Another afternoon, Matheson and I called on Mr. Chu-Ling-Kwang and his brother, Mr. Chu-Kai-Yow, wealthy Cantonese, to whom we had a letter of introduction. The elder brother was a Director of the Szechwan Board of Mines and

largely interested in the mines of the Province, which are numerous and good—copper, gold, silver, salt, antimony, and coal. He spoke English fairly well, and his brother, who had been educated at Hartford, Conn., and had spent ten years in America, quite fluently.

They had a fine house and we were shown into a large room furnished partly in European style, where we sat at a table and had wine and tea and cakes, and I enjoyed an excellent cigar, made in Cheng-tu from native tobacco—too new and rather strong, but of excellent flavour and ash. The district north of this is a great tobacco-growing country, and even finer tobacco is grown on a larger scale in the Province of Shensi.

They were, like most Cantonese, energetic and enterprising, and, moreover, very anxious for communications by which the Province would benefit and which would advance their own mining interests. They told us that the Viceroy was a well-disposed man, but something timid, and they gave us a few useful hints about the other officials. They were very pressing in offering their assistance and hoped to see us often at their house.

On January 15, at two o'clock, we went by appointment to see the Viceroy, and as it was a visit of ceremony we went in four-bearer chairs, sending our six soldiers with the " ting-chai " in his official cap in advance. When we reached the gates leading to the large outer court of the Yamen, the centre gates were thrown open to us. As we entered the rabble rushed in with us, and gathering round, stared at us till the right-hand side gate of the next court was opened and the crowd kept from going

further. We passed through two courtyards, much better kept than usual, to the entrance building, where we were met by a group of handsomely dressed officials with a large backing of soldiers, servants, and small fry.

Mr. Li-shin-ti, the head of the Viceroy's Foreign Office, addressed me in French, which he spoke fluently enough, but which I had much trouble in understanding, finding it always difficult to catch a new intonation. We passed through a smaller courtyard, and turning to the right were met by the Viceroy, a Manchu and a very good-looking man, with extremely suave manners and distinctly pleasant smile. He wore a beautiful fur coat which might have made any lady excusably envious. Chinese ladies, by the way, though allowed to wear furs, must wear them outside in, a commendable check to display!

Through a handsome room with red hangings and chairs covered with large grey wolf-skins, our host led us into a side room, where a long table spread in European fashion with white cloth, glasses, fruit, cakes, flowers, etc., awaited us, and seating himself at the middle of one side he placed us on his right and left.

Mr. Li took one end of the table and the two English interpreters faced us.

Conversation was decidedly difficult, for I could not well make out Mr. Li's French and the interpreters did not understand or interpret us at all correctly. Nor did the Viceroy contribute much, although extremely courteous and urbane in his manner.

After the usual formalities of speech had been

gone through, and I had apologized for the roughness of our attire, due to hard travelling, I remarked on the natural richness of the Province and the difficulty of communication, the rivers having many rapids and the roads being mere mountain-paths, so that the transport of products was most costly. Then I inquired if His Excellency was favourable to foreign methods for improving travel, such as railways; but the interpreter put it that "I had heard that he was favourable," to which he replied that "He had not said so," the interpreter rather conveying the impression that he was unfavourable or opposed. He went on to say that his wish was to do what the people themselves wished and not to force anything on them; to which we assented, and there being no encouragement to pursue the subject, the conversation became discursive, not to say disjointed, and subject to awkward pauses. Matheson broke in in Chinese and got on very well, discussing Amoy and some acquaintances there, the Viceroy having been there thirteen years before, in, of course, a lower position. We had drunk champagne twice, the great man each time turning right and left and bowing, and soon he ordered fresh tea to be brought, the usual signal for putting an end to the interview. When he lifted his cup, we did the same, and took our *congé*, the Viceroy conducting us as far as the place at which he had met us. Of course a first interview is always of a formal character, the object of the visit being seldom broached unless on some direct invitation; still the result did not look very encouraging.

After the meeting we decided that Matheson and Grant should start next day and explore the plain

for three or four days in a westerly direction, while I should remain to see some of the officials and try to push our views somewhat.

Walking along East Street a little before nine o'clock in the evening, we found the shops closed and the sides of the street lined with vendors of all sorts, who spread their wares on the ground or on small stalls and sold their goods by lantern-light, a busy and picturesque scene. Chinese lanterns are very quaint and pretty and vary greatly in shape and size, and the black and red characters on them are most effective.

It was nearly eight o'clock next morning when Matheson and Grant left, the coolies being late as usual at first starting-off. Some of the old coolies hung about hoping to get another job, but we would not have them.

As I was sitting down to my solitary tiffin I had a visit from Mr. Li, who stayed some time, and whose talk I was able to comprehend much better than I had done the day before, so that we got on fairly well. He was a Fu-chau man and had had a technical training in engineering in France, and also at the Fu-chau arsenal, which has always been under French direction. He expressed himself as being personally desirous of promoting foreign enterprise and methods, but feared that the excitable Szech-wanese would give trouble should there be any attempt to introduce railways. Hence it had been decided not to attempt anything in this way at present, but to invite the exploitation of the mines by foreigners of all nations.

I enquired how it would be possible to do this without improved means of transport, and he said

that they intended to allow the concessionaires to connect their mines with their outlets by light lines. I made an appointment to call on him next evening, as he seemed decidedly anxious to hear more.

The following morning I went by appointment to see the brothers Chu. I hoped to obtain a little light on the position with respect to mines and railways, as the elder brother, Mr. Chu-Ling-Kwang, was an official with the rank of Taotai, besides being a Director of the Szechwan Board of Mines. They had not a little to say of the timidity of the Viceroy and the indifference of Chinese officials generally, but their talk seemed to run generally in favour of giving time, and that is just what one does not want to give. I asked whether the report which I had heard was true as to the French having had a concession granted to them to connect this town with Kwan-hsien, about 35 miles to the west, by an electric railway, the idea being to use the water-power there for generating electro-motors to work the line and light up Cheng-tu, and to convey coal from the mines in that locality. They said it was merely talked of, but it was true that the French had obtained a number of mining concessions, although it had been stated in the Shanghai press and from Peking that the Tsung-li Yamen had refused to ratify the concessions granted by Kuei, the Viceroy here. Mr. Li had also told me that the French had obtained concessions.

Mr. Chu remarked that a Viceroy and his officials had, after all, no great object in making alterations in existing methods; it only entailed extra work for them, and the increase in the prosperity of a

Province was of no consequence to them ; their only idea was to have as quiet a time as possible during their term of office.

Later in the day, I saw Mr. Li. He was not communicative and did little more than reiterate what he had previously said, that the Viceroy would not give separate concessions for railways, but that in the concessions of mining rights already granted provision had been made for giving the concessionaires the right of connecting their mines by light lines.

On the next evening I called on the Chus and had about two hours' talk with the brothers, the elder of them being decidedly intelligent and enterprising, while the younger had quick perceptions and understood European ideas, but had apparently not too much stability of character. I unfolded my views more completely and they took them in very clearly, asking many questions to the point and expressing much satisfaction with my answers. But they said that we must wait, for it was possible that in a few weeks the Viceroy would go to another province ; nothing could be done with him just now ; if we would be patient and prepare the way, they felt sure we should be successful.

After dinner (January 19) Mr. Hartwell of the Canadian Mission took me to the Military Academy, where students for commissions are trained. All had left for the New Year holiday, but the Sub-Director, a Tientsin man, kindly showed me over, and we got along together in French. While we looked at the large class-room, the Artillery Instructor came ; he also was a Chih-li man and a captain of Artillery. He courteously invited us

to his room, where we discussed tea and cakes, oranges and affairs. Presently there entered the young interpreter whom we had met at the Viceroy's, a perfect epitome of elegance and affability, beautifully dressed in a robe with two tints of delicate brocaded silk. He produced some short essays, written by the first-year students at the Anglo-Chinese College, and asked us to assist him in deciding as to the respective merits of the essays. One was much superior to the rest, but the grammar and composition of all were quaint, to say the least, some even going to the verge of nonsense. It was too much to expect young students to translate a passage from difficult classic Chinese and expand it into a brief essay of a politico-economical character.

I was struck with one thing; viz., the working of the foreign leaven, for all condemned the conservatism of their own country. "Are foreigners so clever and the Chinese so stupid?" commenced one youth in an essay on the encouragement given in America, England, and France to invention, and the discouragement of it in China through the absence of patent laws.

When I got back about six o'clock to the hotel, Matheson and Grant had returned after an interesting four days' trip. They described the country as easy, but not so fertile as the plain to the north. Kwanhsien, they said, was a very pretty place with fine mountains and a rushing river, but they did not think much of the great hydraulic works in operation there for the purpose of parting the river into many channels to irrigate the plain. Grant had caught a severe cold.

January 20 was a lovely day sandwiched in

between those periods of dull still gloom, which seem to characterize much of the winter climate here. Chinese from the north complain bitterly both of the gloom and cold. They say they can sleep up north in the open with deep snow and ice on the ground, while here they cannot get warm under cover.

Nevertheless it was so warm walking in the sun that I felt my clothes too heavy, and Mr. Hsia said that the season of extreme cold had passed. They divide the winter into two periods of "little cold" and "great cold." They also fix the dates of each period exactly, but incorrectly, for your Chinaman is nothing if not a lover of symmetry.

I made an expedition with Mr. Hsia into the Tartar city which lies in the south-west corner, walled off from the Chinese quarter. It is practically inhabited only by Manchus of the different banners. They receive pay from the Government and are liable for military service, doing no other work; hence they are rather idle and useless beings.

They and the Chinese do not intermarry much, for each race despises the other. The costume of the Manchu men is almost the same as that of the Chinese; but the women dress their hair differently, wear flowing robes, have unbound feet, and, so far as my observation here and elsewhere went, are better-looking, of much finer physique and stature, and move with a freer air and more independent bearing than their Chinese sisters, who have, when young, a very timid, shrinking and insipid appearance.

The streets in the Manchu city are much wider and cleaner; the houses are very low and stand in large

compounds, with many trees and flowering shrubs about them. Everything is neater and more ornamental, and the lanes in which the Manchus of better class, mandarins, etc., have their houses, are quite pretty, each house having a picturesque gateway, the type varying a good deal; for they avoid the "damnable iteration" of the Chinese.

This being the day in the New-Year season when all officials had to hand in their seals of office, we met a number of processions of richly-clad mandarins in handsome chairs, with long retinues on foot and on horseback, soldiers and attendants, banners galore, and large red umbrellas on long poles, men bearing tablets with inscriptions, halberdiers, spearmen and pikemen with the quaintest of weapons, and numbers of boys dressed in most fantastic clothing, with queer caps from which nodded the beautiful long tail-feathers of the Reeves pheasant.

We had asked for an interview for Saturday with the Treasurer, who had the repute of being an able and enlightened official, with a leaning towards foreign methods; but that day being the day appointed for the rendering up of seals of office, he was occupied, and begged us to come on Sunday morning at eleven, instead. Grant feeling a good deal indisposed, Matheson and I went to the Yamen, not far from our inn. The two large courtyards were each supplied with huge gates adorned with most portentous-looking figures painted on the leaves of the doors. We were delayed at the first gate, but I fancy this delay is the usual thing and allows the official personage time to dismiss persons he may have with him, or to don his official robes and make any other preparations. As we entered the

enclosure a Chinese band of music struck up in our honour.

We were ushered through the centre gates of the first courtyard and again of the second, but at the third, which seemed rather a fixture, we were admitted through the side gate, and on alighting from our chairs were met by Mr. Li, and also by the head of the Anglo-Chinese College, one of the two who had interpreted for us at the Viceroy's.

Just round the corner the great man (for he ranks " equal to and under the Viceroy," to use the Chinese phrase, just as the Tartar General of a Province is called " equal to and superior to the Viceroy ") was awaiting us, with a magnificent sable robe over his official dress. He was an oldish man and much crippled with rheumatism, being quite stiff in the back. He led us into a large, airy, well-lit room, with a good deal of red-cloth decoration which is customary and proper, and at one side of it we sat down in European fashion round a table covered with white cloth, on which were dishes of fruit, cakes and sweetmeats and a big flower-vase filled with New-Year lilies and a great flowering spray of the maihora, the beautiful so-called plum-blossom. Tea, champagne and cigars were brought, and we had a really interesting hour's conversation, during which I was struck with the existence of a good deal of intelligent appreciation of the changing times, and also with the lack of knowledge which causes this people to grope in the dark and, as I told the Treasurer, to put the cart too often before the horse.

He said that it was of course very desirable to make railways and improve communications, but

they desired first to develop the mines of the Province, and to utilize its iron and steel for railways. I had to point out that the establishment of iron and steel works was a difficult and serious enterprise and should follow, not precede, the improvement of communications. I instanced the disastrous failure of the Han-yang works, and asked how the heavy and large machinery needed for mines was to be conveyed where it was wanted unless roads were first made for it. They retorted that they had no objection to grant powers to the concessionaires to make light railways of narrow gauge to connect their mines with main roadways.

I explained that railroad-making and mining were two different things, generally best kept separate, and that there were no main roads with which to connect railways; that the first thing necessary to improve a country was to improve communications. But they stuck to it that the time was not ripe, nor the people sufficiently educated; to which I replied that "Les chinois étaient très intelligents et comprenaient bien une telle chose comme les chemins-de-fer, qui mettraient l'argent dans la poche." I had to talk in French, execrable enough, but Mr. Li grasped my meaning in it much more readily than did the other man in English.

"But we should have a revolution if we forced things on the people," they said.

"Quand le gouvernement chinois dit 'oui,' je crois que le peuple ne dise pas 'non,'" at which they all laughed.

I thought they were a little shaken, but a Chinaman does not give in readily, and their suspicion of motive is always deeply rooted. They informed us

that an Imperial Commissioner of Mines was shortly expected in Szechwan, and advised us to wait. I said we had the intention of returning as soon as we had explored the western part of the Province.

The Fan-tai (Provincial Treasurer) then asked "How it was that England, a country which seldom went to war without cause, has made war on a little country like the Transvaal?" with a good many questions as to the progress of the war, etc. They laughed when I told them how I had been nearly "commandeered" myself when travelling in the Transvaal. And I amused them again by referring to the railway question and saying that "seeing how interested in it the Treasurer evidently was, I had no doubt that we should get on capitally together."

When we took our leave he said he would like to return our call, but though he could come in his sedan-chair he feared he could not get out of it, and he was so stiff and pained as he rose that we begged him not to think of doing so. In the afternoon he sent his subordinate with two cards.

After tiffin, Grant went to the Canadian hospital, feeling still unwell, and Dr. Ewan said he had influenza and would have to lay up for a day or two at least. This was unfortunate, as he and Matheson were to have started next day to follow the river down to Lu-chau, while I was to leave the day after for Ya-chau in the west, thence to Kia-ting on the Min, Sui-fu, and so on to Chung-king. Evidently both Grant and I had got a touch the very first evening we were in Cheng-tu.

Next day I made a round of farewell calls which did not improve my cold. We were bidden to dinner

at Mr. Chu's and there met Mr. Neave, Dr. Ewan and Mr. Hartwell, and a young Chinese gentleman in very smart brocades. We had a most excellent dinner *à la russe*, lasting to nearly nine o'clock; pretty decorations, lots of flowers—camellias, mai hora, and the New-Year lily—capital soup, a dish of fish that would have been creditable to any *chef*, roast pigeons, shrimps and salad, roti of pheasant, preserved lychées (the fresh fruit), custards and cakes, oranges and pears, and I know not what else, but with a raging cold in the head and a touch of fever it was not all bliss.

After a rather restless night I woke up at dawn and roused the servants. Grant seemed better, but as he had had a temperature of over 102° the previous evening, I told Matheson to leave him behind unless the doctor said he could go next day without risk.

While in Japan I received a message from Count Katsura, Minister of War, to say that hearing I had lately been in Manchuria he would be much obliged if I would give him an hour.

When I went to his official residence he kept me two and a half hours in very interesting conversation, for he told me much about the campaign in China, during which he commanded a division.

At the end he made a remark of most pregnant nature. Putting his hand on the Liao-Tung Peninsula on the map before us, he said: "If I could only have my way I would submerge this;" and then, shifting his hand over Corea, he added, "and I think I would like to do the same to this."

CHAPTER XV.

CHENG-TU TO YA-CHAU.

AT the south gate we found our ponies, four little garrons the size of Shetlands—very rough, and with still rougher harness—rope headgear and bridle and a demi-pique saddle of wood and cloth, the last in shreds and patches. These, with two mafoos to look after them, cost 1,250 cash per day apiece. The regular figure for a day's stage is 400 cash, but we were taking ours to Ya-chau, and of course were told that on the return journey they might get no job. The carrier-coolies each cost 400 cash per day, about one shilling apiece; there were five of them and a "fu-to" or head-coolie; and they went along well all day, giving no trouble whatever.

Mr. Hsia, the cook and the boy all chose to ride, and as ponies come cheaper than chairs I had no objection. They all seemed in high spirits, and the big cook, for the better protection of the party, had armed himself with a fine sword in a green shagreen case with red silk tassels, for which he had paid 1,000 cash (about two and sixpence). He was a jovial sort of cuss, and the way he laid about him with a stick, or a rope, or with his fine long queue, to keep too inquisitive folk off, always

amused me. In fact they all looked after me and studied my comfort and wishes most assiduously. My mount was a little chestnut, who manifested the greatest dislike to the sight and smell of a foreigner, but once I was on his back, he accepted the position. Chinese ponies' paces are always rough. The riders sit hunched up on a saddle with very short stirrups, and don't rise in them; hence the ponies go at a sort of shambling amble, varied by a rough jog-trot, too slow to rise to and too bumpy to sit down and endure.

We passed, near the south gate of the city, a fine large temple set in a great grove of tall dark cypresses, which I should have liked to explore. Somewhere near, I believe, is the tomb of one of the old Emperors, for Cheng-tu was once an Imperial capital.

Our course lay south-westerly over the plain, with a low hill range on the left for a while. This was of red earth—decomposed sandstone—but the plain was pure alluvial blue mud, rather heavy stuff and of poor quality. The crops of wheat, turnips, and beans (no opium) were poor and backward compared with those of the rich country we had been passing through before reaching Cheng-tu. A good deal of rice land was lying fallow.

The road, generally 12 to 15 feet wide, was simply of beaten mud much cut up by the sharp-wheeled barrows, and must be pretty "soft" in wet weather. Running water usually lay alongside of it and the banks were fringed with alders, rather straight-growing and large-leaved.

Not unfrequently we passed over stone bridges across streams from 2 to 20 yards wide, shallow,

fast running and clear, but containing sewage. There were many runnels and irrigation cuts and sluices, and here and there dams to give power to small horizontal mill-wheels. Besides several towns and large villages we passed one "hsien" or prefectural town (Shwang-lui) densely packed with people from end to end of its long central street, as well as in the suburbs, it being market-day.

The farms were large and often walled-in; and they were densely surrounded with bamboos and tall cypresses. They had a fashion here of breaking down and wattling together young bamboos so as to form a thick hedge from 10 to 15 feet high. Near one such farm was a shrine by the road side, with a particularly hideous idol the size of a child of 12, the mouth and lips being thickly daubed with opium in payment of some vow. Many graves were adorned with sticks bearing strings of paper cash. These, according to Mr. Hsia, were offerings to the devils from persons who deprecated molestation of the departed spirits. I had hitherto understood that the cash were for the use of the departed one himself.

Once in broad daylight we met two men, one of whom carried a lighted lantern, and the other some clothing on a pole. A man had lost his wits, and friends were taking his clothes to some spot where he was supposed to have been bereft of them. There they would loudly call him by name, and, if all went well, his wandering spirit would return to the familiar clothing, which would then be taken home.

At one spot we met a number of men carrying

large coffin boards of very valuable wood, brought from the mountains, 300 li distant; the cost of a coffin made from these boards being about 200 taels. Coffins in use are hermetically sealed, and are left about, often for months, pending the selection by the priests of a proper site or an opportune time for burial. When the deceased is wealthy, this selection takes time and money.

Coffin shops are conspicuous everywhere, and a well-varnished black coffin is often bought in advance or even presented as a mark of respect by friends or relatives during lifetime. People are buried in their best clothes, and the missionaries told me that native Christians frequently bought handsome white robes, so that they may be provided with the right garb at the resurrection.

A man carrying on his head a small light punt upside down, with seven or eight croaking cormorants perched gravely on it, was kind enough to stop and let me take their pictures, and refused cash in return. I should like to have seen them at work.

We passed Chii-Chiao and Hwang-sui-ho, and completed 90 long li during the day, travelling at the rate of from 3 to 3½ miles an hour.

I had tramped about half the distance, and was more tired than I had been when walking all day, being weak after eight days of a cold. In the afternoon fever came on again, so I exhibited quinine to lay the fiend.

During the night the room next mine was occupied by travelling merchants, who talked with hard voices in the "soft Szechwan accent." They had a toy, a cylinder with openings so ar-

ranged that, when revolved rapidly by an alternating motion of a string, a sonorous whistling was produced. This music, of which a very little was enough, was continued far into the night, with frequent variations, caused by the toy falling and rolling on the wooden floor accompanied by shrieks of laughter. However, I slept well enough, had no fever, and felt better on awaking, but still had a cold on me.

Next morning we noticed, just outside the village, an idol with opium-smeared mouth and a pair of straw sandals slung round his neck, the offerings of grateful clients. As we were starting, a magistrate with a posse of picturesque tatterdemalions, carrying all sorts of quaint antiquities in the shape of arms, came along to investigate a case of brigandage or robbery. At a place distant about 10 li, some robbers having attacked a house, the "village protector" had come to the rescue, blowing a horn to summon the villagers, whereupon the robbers had attacked him and left him dead. From mid-day on I noticed a number of small mat-shelters at points along the road, with large soldiers' banners stuck in front and rusty implements of war. These I was told had been placed because of the anticipated troubles. At night the flags and the "braves" with them were a warning to evil-doers, and long horns were sounded to further warn the brigands not to come that way.

After breakfasting at Yang-chwan, we passed nearer to and almost parallel with the low hill-range bordering the south side of the plain. The ground here was slightly undulating, the soil,

though still alluvial, had a little more character about it, and the crops were rather better and cleaner. A pretty dull-green stream kept us company for a time; its still pools were bordered with trees and clumps of rushes; a bit of stronger water here and there was taken advantage of to drive a mill. The mill-building spanned the stream as a rule and the water was parted into three sluices, the larger one driving a heavy edge-running millstone at a good pace, while the smaller ones gave a reciprocating motion to large sieves from a vertical shaft. The shafts were driven by horizontal wheels with almost vertical vanes impelled by the water in the sluice.

This river was apparently the Min affluent, which we had crossed just before getting to our last night's resting-place; a broad and rapid stream, blue-green coloured like the other rivers of the Province; we had to cross several smaller branches divided by shingle beds from the main river.

During the winter months temporary wooden bridges are put up, but are removed before the summer rise, when ferries take their place. Simple trestles support a fragile creaky superstructure of a few longitudinal poles and loose, uneven cross planks, with a single line of planks in the middle for the wheelbarrow traffic. I was informed from a native source that the Min runs down as far as Kia-ting through easy country, bordered by low hills—no gorges or ravines.

I was surprised at the number of bridal processions we met early in the morning and in the forenoon, and also at the number of coffins interred.

Mr. Hsia said that this was a lucky day for both weddings and burials. Every year a calendar is prepared by the astrologers at Peking giving the days in each "moon" favourable for these and other purposes, the dates varying both according to the month and the purpose. In the processions the bride's chair was entirely of red, the luck colour, and closed from view; with her were bearers carrying her clothing, ornaments, new furniture, etc., all as much as possible exposed to view. On these were laid small circles of paper, which, with scalloped edges tipped with red or green and perforated, were supposed to bring good luck and were scattered by the roadside. Boys and men with gay flags and playing musical instruments also accompanied the chair; the wealthier the people, the bigger and finer the show. A very poor man could not afford to hire a red chair for his bride elect, but the bearers had a strip of red cloth tied over them.

After mid-day the road lay over a perfectly flat plain with very few water openings of moment. The mountains to the south receded almost out of sight. The country is well-watered, cultivated and populous; every farm and cottage embowered in a mass of bamboos, cypress and deciduous timber; many alders and poplars flourishing beside the streams and runnels.

Kiung-chau, a large prefectural walled city, was reached at 4.40 p.m. It is a great seat of paper manufacture; the main street is wide for a Chinese city and well paved. The inn too, though it had serious defects, was, on the whole, a good one.

In the morning I had noticed a fine large wild falcon resembling the falcons met with outside Cheng-tu, used for catching hares. Afterwards we met a man who had just come two days' journey from the hills, and had over his shoulder two pheasants—a cock and a hen—which he had shot; hens were plentiful, cocks very scarce, he said. He asked 500 cash for the cock—we offered 200 (less than sixpence); he laughed our offer to scorn and we turned to go, but before we had gone six paces he shouted out that he would sell, the price being about double what he would get from Chinese.

The hen was a tame-looking, brown-feathered, domestic sort of creature as hens should be, but the cock was a lovely bird—whether Reeves or Amherst I don't know (the latter probably).* Size about that of the common pheasant. Brown-black bill; blue wattles above and below eye; red behind; bronze plumage on head with a short tuft of brilliant silky scarlet, 2 to 2½ inches. Behind the head most beautiful plumes of pure white just touched and edged with black. The back bronze-green, with a dark edge to each feather; the throat the same; breast and belly white with grey below at the pencil end of the feather; thighs and legs mottled brown; wing

* Perhaps the Moonal or Impeyan pheasant, found among the mountains of the Western Yangtsze region. Of the common Moonal it has been said: "There are few sights more striking, where birds are concerned, than that of a grand old cock, shooting out horizontally from the hill-side just below one, glittering, flashing in the golden sunlight, a gigantic rainbow-tinted gem, and then dropping stone-like with closed wings into the abyss below." The Reeves pheasant, notable by its immense tail, which attains five feet in length, is found in the mountains opposite Ichang. The Amherst pheasant is chiefly found in the mountains of Western China.—ED.

coverts from bronze-green near body to brown; pinions from brown-black to mottled turkey-brown. Lower part of back changing from bronze-green to black, barred with brilliant silky gold; feathers over rump tipped with crimson and barred with black and white. The first and shorter tail-feathers grey-white with broad transverse bars of black and well tipped with crimson; the short under-tail plumes brown-barred with black. But the chief glory, apart from the lovely neck ruffles, lay in the six tail-plumes, over a yard long; the four under ones grey on one side of the rib merging into brown with broad curved bands of black an inch apart; and on the other side mottled grey and black. These were covered by two large broad plumes curved as to their length and V-shaped in section, of pale-grey white with broad curved black bands across at every inch, and irregularly marked with small black streaks between the bands. Truly a lovely creature, and a marvel of colour composition.

We left Tsien-Kau (as Mr. Hsia calls it, Kiung-chau as marked on map) by the south gate, January 25, and came out on a river which we crossed by a substantial stone bridge, with long piers at short intervals supporting a straight superstructure of stone. Some little way higher were traces of an older bridge and just below were the fallen-in remains of a third, much larger and finely arched, with half of its home span on the south bank still standing. The cause of its collapse was simply undercutting of the foundations. Yet in the new bridge, a heavy one, this fact was disregarded and the foundations consisted

of a simple stone-block pavement of the same width as the bridge.

The further bank rose steeply, and we were at once in country of a new type; decomposed yellow clay mixed with a little sand, very stiff, tenacious and greasy, not lending itself well to agriculture. Hence for the whole day we saw little but rice-land lying fallow and largely under water, few vegetables, and the crop of winter wheat poor and backward. Timber was very plentiful, almost entirely firs, growing in copses and small plantations or dividing the cultivated patches. There were a few araucarias, the stem not prickly, but the leaf and branch almost identical with the monkey-puzzle, a sprinkling of deciduous trees, and here and there a few banyans. The cypress had vanished entirely, although, up to the river, hardly anything else was to be seen. The ground was gently undulating, though undulation is hardly the word to apply to land broken by terraces and levelled by paddy-cultivation. The narrow road, rising imperceptibly, save by the aneroid, often wound between high banks or rough hedges of wild-rose, blackthorn, and sloe, and past copses where the brown pine-needles prevented undergrowth. Though little varying, the scene was pretty, even on a day grey and cheerless with continual Scotch mist. Houses and hamlets were far fewer and much poorer-looking, as were the towns and larger villages also, but there were numerous inns and resting-places, showing the existence of a good deal of traffic. This was the highway towards Tibet, and several times we met "black men," as the Chinese call the Tibetans,

whose complexion, however, is little darker than their own.

I noticed a considerable difference in the type of the Chinese themselves—their faces, especially those of the women, being smaller, flatter and rounder, and more pleasing though by no means comely. They were of that apple-cheeked, snub-nosed, round-faced type usually associated with good temper and a mirthful disposition.

Great numbers were on the road, for the most part going into town with empty baskets to lay in New-Year stores and finery. What carrying there was, was done by the females to a greater extent than I had noticed hitherto. It was unpleasant to see withered old women, mature matrons, and young wives bent double under a heavy back load, trudging painfully over the rough, large, round cobbles or greasy clay on their small feet, though these were not nearly so small as usual.

On this side of the Province, the people stared less, and were much less intrusive than on the eastern side. The inns were on the whole decidedly better, and a thought cleaner, and there was more regard for the decencies in sanitary arrangements. We met many porters carrying the large shallow iron pans used for cooking, a yard across, and bales of rough lamb-skins. We passed a large pack-train of mules and ponies, laden entirely with the various and wonderful medicines of the Chinese pharmacopœia.

We also met two small parties of men, each of whom held a leash of six small dogs the size of spaniels and somewhat resembling them, but with sharp-pointed noses and fussy rather than wavy

coats. They had "drop" ears, and pendent, curving tails, whereas the usual Chinese dog has erect ears and a brush more like a wild dog or wolf, which, in these parts, it closely resembles in its coat and in its habits and demeanour. These dogs had come from the Tibetan border and were being taken into Szechwan to be sold for sporting purposes. Several times we saw duck-herds (not uncommon in China) armed with long flexible bamboos driving their flocks from paddy field to paddy field, and well did the birds understand the meaning of "bamboo chow-chow."

We took a short cut near the finish, and got on a most villainous path in consequence; but at last we dropped over a low ridge above the town of Pei-tsae, at the east entrance of which there is a handsome arched bridge of several spans across the little river. During the day we had travelled 85 li, having passed the roadside place called Wu-li-tau, and the town of Ka-chi-pu.

The inn at Pei-tsae belonged to a small mandarin who was delegate for the nearest Hsien magistrate. His house, with a pleasant courtyard, was immediately behind the rooms of honour at the back of the inn, whence a broad covered way ran to the street with two-storeyed rooms for minor guests on either hand. When we arrived, a small but noisy crowd was inside this covered court, surrounding a prisoner in irons who had been "quarrelling." They said he would probably pay some money to the authority and be released, rather than be sent to the nearest magistrate and there "squeezed."

Immediately on leaving the town (January 26)

we had to breast a short steep brae some 250 to 300 feet high, where we found ourselves on a sort of table-land, with a long valley running to the right in the direction we were going, and beyond it tier over tier of ranges all powdered with snow, the summits bathed in mist and cloud. "A north cutting wind," as Mr. Hsia observed, was blowing over the flat, exposed country, making our ears and fingers tingle.

The road was a six-foot path, along the middle of which ran a line of small, narrow, sandstone flags at all angles and in all stages of fracture and decay; being for the most part loose, they tilted up as one's weight came on them and squirted up a shower of muddy water. The alternative was to walk over roughly-laid, round cobbles, the size of a man's head, with slush and clay between. Twice during the morning Mr. Hsia measured his length on the ground, and I had a number of escapes, my nailed boots saving me. The ponies plodded on with heads down, and there was no merry jingle from their bells. I never mounted mine all day, save once to pass through a crowded market-town. The country was less populous, the soil clayey and not too rich, and nearly all of it, being rice land, lay fallow under water. Only the dark clumps of trees round the farmhouses and the snow-covered, cloud-capped range away on the right, lent some dignity to the cheerless prospect.

At the small town of Hsin-tien-tse, which we reached at 9.28, the little pagoda and curved roofs of a temple amidst some fine trees near, made a point in the gloomy landscape, and I photographed

it with a shivering soldier of my escort in the foreground.

During the next ten li or so there were low, sweeping undulations, and the valley on the right became shallow and drew near. The wide expanse of dark field-pools with their dividing banks white with snow, the sombre ragged tree-line against the low sloping horizon, the dull grey and white of the cloud-line above, the long dark road-ribbon with here and there a traveller, had a picturesqueness all their own.

We drew on to a low neck which connected our plateau with that across the valley, and from it on our left the ground dropped quickly, forming the head of a fine dale trending away to the south. We struck down this, the descent being very rapid for the first few hundred feet and then more easy and extremely picturesque, with many fine trees on the ridges, including some of forest growth, which I took to be hard maples. The banyans which I had seen in Eastern Szechwan also re-appeared occasionally. At the foot of the hill lay the prefectural walled town of Ming-shan. Being market-day, it was full of country folk making their New-Year purchases and there was a brisk trade doing in women's ornaments of a cheap kind (mostly artificial flowers for the hair), crackers, grotesque masks, lanterns and coloured prints of the grotesque protecting gods which are generally found on every house door. These, as well as the lanterns and the names and professions of their owners, must always be new for the New Year.

Despite the coldness of the weather there were

several beggars, naked save for a loincloth, either lying on the wet stones at the feet of the crowd, or crouching down, shivering in almost convulsive movements. It is part of their profession, but they must suffer much. I was told that during the cold snap which preceded our visit to Cheng-tu, a woful sight in the morning, outside the west gate, was the crowd of beggars who came to get the daily dole of rice given by the city authorities, and, more horrible still, the piled-up heaps of naked corpses of those who had died of the cold during the night.

On leaving the town, which is washed by a shallow stream of 30 or 40 yards width, our course for a few li lay over the level plain, where I again noticed poppy-growing. We did not go far, however, before we turned off to the right up a very narrow, winding valley with steep hills on either side. The formation at its entrance abruptly changed to the familiar soft red sandstone. The strata of the decomposing rock lay at a moderate angle, and so the valleys and watershed were well defined and pleasant to the eye. We ascended by a gradient easy for some distance but very steep towards the top, some 500 or 600 feet above the plain. At the crest of the pass was a little hamlet consisting of a few rest-houses, with a stone gateway at each end, on which bold characters announced the spot to be the Station of the Golden Pheasant. I enquired if pheasants were plentiful, and was told no, because at this season they retired into caves! The Chinese name is Chin-chi-kwan.

We had scarcely cleared the gate of the station when a superb panorama literally burst upon us.

At our feet lay the whole valley of the river running down from Ya-chau to Kia-ting—a plain from a mile to two miles wide, very fertile and populous —each little hamlet, farm, or town, simply embowered in trees. A fine hill-range, white with snow, rose steeply from the flat on the opposite side, and equally sheer was the mountain range on our side, which, running parallel with the river above our point of view, curved towards it below us. The way across the plain was really very pretty and diversified, but the light soon faded, we were tired, and the li (which are long in this region) seemed to multiply and increase.

I rescued an old woman who had sunk, with a heavy load on her back, into a ditch of water in trying to cross it. Had I not done so, not a soul of those with me would have moved a finger to help her.

The light was all but gone when we crossed one branch of the river by a fine covered bridge and then another branch by a floating bamboo bridge, quite a curiosity; a mere raft of bundles of bamboos, lashed together, ends to the current, awash with the water, the whole sagging into a semicircle with the strong current. A few flat slabs and crooked boards flung down casually on it served for footpath. It is removed in the high water time.

The long suburban street was pretty with lanterns as was also the main street, up which we had to go for some distance before reaching our inn—a not too clean or comfortable one for a town of 20,000 folk. However, I learnt afterwards that there was a better.

I sent a message to Mr. Upcraft, of the American Baptist Mission, that I would call on him in the morning, not feeling equal, with my heavy cold, to turning out again, and, soon after, I heard his cheery voice asking for me.

We had an hour's pleasant talk, for he had travelled far and wide in these parts. He kindly insisted on my coming to them, and with pleasure I agreed to do so next morning.

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CHAPTER XVI.

YA-CHAU TO KIA-TING.

HAVING arrived at Ya-chau on January 26, I found the town in commotion, preparing for New-Year's day, which in China falls on our January 31. The stir and pother were incessant, a coming and going of presents between all sorts and conditions of people from the Taotai, the Fu, and the magistrate downwards, excited servants knocking at the door every five minutes to announce the arrival of an offering or to ask instructions for sending one. The presents are entirely of food—fruit, cakes and confections, roasted fowls, flattened-out fat ducks, pieces of venison, pork, etc. They are placed on deep oblong trays suspended on a pole, carried by two bearers, and a servant accompanies them. The recipient has to give a few cash to the carrier-coolies, but something more considerable to the servant, who, from the Taotai, for example, receives as much as 500 cash. The gifts are borne openly through the streets, everything displayed to public gaze and examination, to the joy of the servants and the high dignity of the sender and receiver.

Pieces of red paper cut out to form very ornamental characters of appropriate meaning are laid on the

dishes. Tribes of beggars come to receive their vails, and servants, subordinates and tradesfolk all appear to make obeisance, give presents and square up accounts. The closing of all accounts is obligatory, but some persons find it convenient to be absent from home at the season, others dispute the claims and some can't pay up.

On New-Year's Eve lantern decorations come into force, and it is also the time appointed for receiving back the kitchen god, who watches over affairs domestic and who has been absent a few days, rendering in the higher courts an account of what has been going on during the year in the particular family to which he is attached.

On this night also lights are placed before the ancestral tablets which occupy the place of honour in every house, and the assembled family do homage. At earliest dawn, or even before, people start to make their calls of ceremony on friends and relations and chair-coolies reap their harvest of the year, obtaining whatever prices they demand.

Shops are shut and the owners, dressed in their best, feast and receive in semi-darkness at the back.

At an early hour the officials meet at one of the temples to worship the Emperor. The highest official performs the rites, which are highly ceremonial, and then the others all do him honour. After this they hasten round the town in their grandest robes of state and pay their duty visits.

One of these personages came to visit at Mr. Upcraft's and, on his card being brought in, a message was sent out that "we were unworthy to receive him," a polite fiction, saving time to all parties and perhaps more elegant than our "not at

home." I was summoned to receive the compliments of the congregation, who stood in the Great Hall and "chin-chinned" three times, while I did the same and then Mr. Upcraft expressed my gratification.

On the last evening of the old year, the servants, to whom I had presented the sum of 1,400 cash

MODE OF CARRYING TEA INTO TIBET.

(about 3s. 3d.), came and "chin-chinned." I presented my two soldiers with 500 cash apiece, and the cook and boy each with 1,500. The day I arrived, one could exchange silver for about 1,240 cash the tael, but now one could not get more than about 1,180, the demand for cash for so many purposes having sent the price of silver down.

Ya-chau is a quiet little country town of some 20,000 folk, whose subsistence is derived chiefly

from the export to Tibet of tea grown in the neighbourhood, and into China of the medicinal herbs found in the mountains. It sits in a valley amid high and picturesque ranges, beside an extremely rapid, though short, river which joins the Min at Kia-ting.

It is on the high road to Tibet and also to Ning-yuan and the famous Kien-chang valley to the south, and therefore is a very important transit and distributing centre. Even those wishing to go from Kia-ting to Ning-yuan, find it easier to strike the road thither at this place, rather than to take a route which on the map looks much more direct.

The people in these parts are countrified, much more simple and unsophisticated than elsewhere, if one may apply the word "unsophisticated" to a Chinaman at all. Neither are they so rude and inquisitive, and the foreigner can move about unmolested. Missionaries get on very easily with them, and Mr. Upcraft seemed on most excellent terms with all; greetings beset him all along the street and in the country outside, and his relations with the officials were equally pleasant, though of course they were not Szechwanese—no official being allowed to hold office in his own Province.

Still there is a good deal of crime and lawlessness, murder being very frequent and for the most trivial causes. Where the magistrates are indifferent or lax this form of crime grows rapidly, but firmness, in inflicting the death penalty, keeps it in check among a people who are excitable as well as phlegmatic, and who stop at nothing when they allow themselves to be seized with a fit of passion. This fit

they seem to have the power of bringing on or averting at will.

The Szechwanese are livelier and quicker-witted than most Chinese, and are much more nervous. They do not stand pain in the extraordinary manner of so many Chinese, and show the white feather very much over surgical operations. They are said to be more pleasure-loving and also much more excitable and passionate than the Chinese in other provinces. When properly wound up they get quite beside themselves, and are scarcely conscious of what they do —hence they become dangerous as a mob and when disposed to riot.

The Ya-ho, the river on which Ya-chau stands, is of the usual beautiful blue-green and in winter perfectly pellucid; it is of fair width, and flows between extensive shingle beds with great speed. Rising but a short distance above in the mountains, it is practically a mountain torrent, a succession of rocky pools with stretches of shingle-bottomed shallows, from a few inches to a few feet deep, and violent foaming rapids with steep shallow glides above them. The current runs at speed even in the pools.

Fish (large carp and other kinds) abound and one sees everywhere fishermen with nets, with rod and line, or with cormorants, of which there are many wild also. Merganser are plentiful, and there are any quantity of teal, widgeon, mallards, pintail, shovel-heads and some very large light yellow-brown ducks, quite new to me.

Numbers of small swallows, brown on the back and dirty-white underneath, course over the stream, and many pretty black-and-red ouzels

may be seen. Ring-neck crows also frequent the shingle.

Both up and down stream the mountains seem to close in; but the banks are picturesque with trees and quaint buildings and the *tout ensemble* is very pleasing. A little below the town is the bamboo construction we had crossed when entering Ya-chau. This raft bridge is moored to the shore on either side by a very short twisted cable, the thickness of a man's leg, of plaited bamboo-rind, and is anchored to large cairns of shingle stones, held in shape by a bamboo framework—a big gabion. It is maintained at the charge of the town and an inscription on the bank tells that its use is free; but this inscription is removed when the carriers carrying in all haste from the Ning-yuan valley to Western Szechwan their precious and perishable freight of the pupæ of the white-wax insect have to pass this river, and then the boatmen make extortionate charges. A fine arched stone bridge spans an affluent flowing beneath the walls. A short strip of land separates the raft bridge from a bridge spanning an affluent on the left bank, a very long and tolerably high wooden structure, covered in with a heavy tiled roof and carried on slim, rough-hewn oblongs of stone forming columns rather than piers. We observed a pine-tree near with its trunk at the fork quite smothered in large polypodium ferns. One sees many similar instances in these parts, where there are numerous and in some cases most formidable parasitic growths on the trees, owing to the humidity of the climate. Large handsome orchids also grow on many trees.

One afternoon towards dusk we took a turn up

the river with our guns. We saw a few duck, but for a long time had no success. At length we noticed that close to some fishing rods fixed by large stones over an inviting eddy, a drake and duck had taken to the water. We turned and headed for them and both dropped to the two reports, to the great delight of a small knot of Chinese on the bank at the ferry.

Of course they appraised their weight and value as the chief matter; pure sport does not enter into their considerations. "Two ducks, each weighing so many catties, at so much per catty—that comes to so much. Teacher, how much does a cartridge cost? So much. Two cartridges, at so much, make so many cash. So much from so much leaves so many cash. Teacher, you have done well to-day. How much out of the fulness of your heart will you give me?"

At another time: "You have fired three times and got nothing. Three cartridges, at so much, make so many cash. Blank cash thrown away for nothing—that is bad—very bad indeed, Teacher!"

Nearly the whole conversation of the Chinese turns on the cost and value of things, and everything seen and done is appraised.

Coming back we passed along the main street of the town, which is fairly wide; crackers and very loud squibs were going off in all directions, and the large paper lanterns with their quaint shapes and quainter characters shed a soft radiance in the gloom.

Mr. Upcraft and I discovered that we had met in the autumn of 1887 on board the *Port Victor;*

strange that we should meet again on the border of Tibet.

Having resolved to descend the river to Kia-ting, I chartered a raft for the voyage. Its construction was simplicity itself, but admirably adapted for its purpose. It was made of large bamboos of four or five inches diameter, lashed together and stiffened by cross pieces on the upper side, 70 to 80 feet long by about 10 feet wide, very slightly brought in at the ends, the bow end curved upwards about three feet. It was handled by three short stout oars worked on crutches, two near the bow on the same side, and one by the captain and an assistant at the stern. Passengers and cargo were carried on light frames raised about 15 inches from the level of the bamboos. With the load on board, the flooring was about half immersed, and the water naturally passed freely through the interstices and in the rapids washed over the raft from end to end. A more shallow-draft vessel would be an impossibility.

It was warmer, for the thaw had come but with the usual raw, damp Szechwan atmosphere, when on February 1, about 10 o'clock, my raft pushed off from Ya-chau. It was chartered to take us to Kia-ting—two and a half days' journey—for 4,000 cash (about 10 shillings). Travelling seems cheap in this country and so it is as to cost of boats, animals and labour, but when put to the test of time spent and the total expenses of getting over a short distance, it is very costly indeed. A mat shed had been put up along the after part—some 18 feet long by 4 feet wide by 5 feet high—divided into three parts, one for the

soldiers, one for the servants, and the one aft for myself. Small bamboos 15 inches above the raft itself with a straw mat laid on them gave me a place in which I could just lie, or on the end of which I could sit half in the open and always prepared to tuck my feet up as the deck went under water in shooting rapids.

Mr. Upcraft accompanied me for a few hours and brought his gun. By mid-day we had between us nine mallards, eight teal and one merganser. The birds frequent the shingle banks, especially where these are partly covered, but always just above or below rapids. They had commenced to pair, so we took the drakes only as far as possible; all were in excellent condition and plumage.

Ten miles down, Upcraft's pony and mafoo were awaiting him and I parted from him with regret, having formed a high opinion of him and of his methods amongst the Chinese. He was on the best terms with many of the Roman Catholic Fathers, though disapproving of their system and methods. Here, as elsewhere, the Roman Catholics had acquired a great deal of landed property, and had used the large compensations they had wrung from the Chinese Government to make very considerable purchases. Consequently they were looked upon with much suspicion by the officials and people. The right of official rank, which they had recently secured by decree, had a political aspect and caused doubt. Their method of proselytising was different from that of the Protestants, who mixed with the people personally, while the Roman Catholics apparently gained converts through their existing flocks, and by exercising pressure by means of their

official and landed position. They were said to gain converts by letting them have land and houses and other material advantages at low rates, a system which certainly would appeal to John Chinaman. However this might be, there was no doubt but that the Roman Catholics did throw their ægis over their converts in the Law Courts both civil and criminal, and as the Chinese are extremely litigious they would, for this advantage alone, often embrace Christianity.

I heard from not a few missionaries that they often found Chinese anxious to be able to call themselves Christians in civil actions. Upcraft gave me a number of cases in which most ingenious efforts were made to get round him, he having taken the honest and firm line of acquainting the officials that in no way would he support actions brought by Christian converts. The Chinese officials, always timid, were concerned not to be mixed up in any way disadvantageous to themselves with matters in which foreigners were opposed to them.

I was delighted to hear that Upcraft knew the Abbé de G—— very well—the latter having twice been stationed at Ya-chau ; the last time so recently that he had only left to take up an appointment at Sui-fu, the day before my arrival.

The day wore on not unpleasantly, despite the dull damp gloom, which hardly set off the picturesque scenery. The light, but long and unwieldy-looking, craft was handled beautifully among the ever-changing difficulties of the descent, sometimes scraping over three or four inches of water, sometimes bending with the strain as she swept down rapids among curling white waves four or five feet high.

Often she was submerged by the wash from the rocks ; here and there she followed " cuts " through the shingle-bed, four to six inches deep and just wide enough to let her pass ; now and then, when the rapids were too violent, she was let down gently, the crew walking on the bank and retarding her descent by means of a bamboo line.

During the afternoon we passed through three or four miles of beautiful mountain gorges—precipitous sandstone cliffs, fern clad, and with steep hills above ; rills and verdure everywhere.

At 5.30, after having gone 70 li, we tied up at a little market town called Loh-pa. Many people sleep on board the rafts, but I had a hint that for this our party was rather too large ; and, besides, with the remains of a bad cold still on me, I thought it expedient to seek the seclusion of an inn.

At half-past six (February 2) we rejoined our craft. The air was mild but mist brooded over all. The climate of Szechwan, and of West Szechwan in particular, may be described as moist and cloudy, but there are no clouds to speak of, only a dull grey canopy which sometimes during the day becomes Scotch mist.

The rapids were very numerous in this day's journey, one or two looking much worse than anything I had seen on the Yangtsze. As the day drew on and stream after stream added its waters, the river broadened to 100 or 120 yards, but still remained for the most part shallow and pebbly. Hills came down to touch us on one side or the other, but seldom on both sides together. Now and then tall pagodas showed the neighbourhood of a fair-sized town, but there was little evidence of traffic

and the farms did not appear numerous, though the ground was apparently cultivated everywhere. The river villages were prettily situate on low bluffs, and white-washed, half timbered gables peeped from amid clumps of tall, umbrella-shaped evergreens.

Ducks were very numerous, and had I had plenty of cartridges of the right kind I could have shot 20 or 30 couple easily. I fired off half a score of Mauser revolver cartridges at them; but, though the bullets seemed often to churn the water up under them, the birds went scathless.

For the eighth day in succession I was without the sense of smell and of taste, and was unable to distinguish except by sight and touch between one viand and another, tea, whisky, and coffee being alike to me except for the difference in temperature. So I tested the captain and crew's taste for European food. Whether from politeness or approval, or mere hunger I know not, for of intelligible speech between us there was none, but they ate toast and marmalade, bread and potted meat, with perfect *aplomb*.

At mid-day we passed a little temporary fishing settlement where, irrespective of some in the water, I counted nearly 140 small fishing punts hauled up on the strand, on each of which were perched several tame cormorants. It spoke well for the capacity of the river that it could sustain such a host of cormorants at one spot. A boat laden down to the gunnel with baskets of fine, good-sized, fresh fish came alongside, and we took the load on board for Kia-ting. Soon after, we struck a largish town, and here my guard (a small boy, sent by the Ya-chau

magistrate) left us, and another Yamen-runner of a sort came on board and my passport was asked for. On each such occasion the magistrate's card was brought and mine had to be sent in return. Mr. Hsia said my cards were being used up at the rate of six per day; so my name ought to be a household word in Szechwan. The officials were evidently very anxious that there should be no difficulties or dangers for European travellers.

We kept on till well after dark and, having come 110 li, landed for the night at the market town of Chin-fun-yen.

In the flood seasons these rafts do the whole 250 li from Ya-chau to Kia-ting between sunrise and sunset of one day.

Next morning at 6.50 we got off. It had rained in the night and the air was a little clearer, but soon the day settled down to the usual gloom. It was a fortnight since we had seen the sun. The wind had changed and the air was a shade keener, pinching our ears and toes as we sat at the end of the raft near the charcoal brazier, over which the captain spent most of his time toasting his hands, leaving the aide to do full duty now that the water was broad and the rapids easy.

We met many rafts, each with its crew of four, upward bound, tracked close in shore by a bamboo strip (not rope) with the ends spliced together. The skipper when not wading was on board, keeping the craft off shore. The hardness of the boatmen's mode of life was shown by their swollen, chapped, and chilblained hands and the rough, scarred and excoriated skin of their feet and legs.

Duck were comparatively scarce. They ap-

parently like best the upper reaches and brawling waters; those we saw were mostly divers and widgeon, and some which, through the gloom, looked like the beautiful mandarin duck. On the shingle beds I noticed lap-wings and the same green plover which we have, but no stone curlew, which Upcraft told me were not uncommon.

At a town opposite that at which we had spent the night, some 17 prisoners had taken advantage of its being New-Year time to kill their two jailors and escape. Four were retaken the next day and at once decapitated. The same fate awaited the others on recapture, as jail-breaking is a capital offence and demands no confirmation from Peking.

The valley continued to broaden out, the pools lengthened and deepened, and the rapids became few and easy. About 11 o'clock I left the ship and took a cut across a bend over level country, very fertile and well tilled, with broad beans in full flower, winter wheat nearly as high, and much opium.

The New-Year festivities were still going on; people had returned to work, and those who had not were spending their time in gambling. We met several parties of women going visiting, all very gay in their brightest and best and with marvellous coiffures, their heads being stuck all over with artificial flowers and ornaments. Some were mounted on the huge water-buffalo, very slow but hardly stately. While waiting a quarter of an hour for the raft I was the centre of a ring of country folk who stared and gaped but were not boisterous.

A few miles above Kia-ting an affluent joins the river on the right bank. The left bank is a series of low bluffs with many very ancient caves in the faces of the sandstone cliffs. Ferns and plants grow freely in the moist air, and for its scenery Kia-ting is famous.

Soon we saw, straight before us, the high, steep bank of the Min river, crowned with great pagodas and dark with trees, while on our left there came into view the long river-wall of Kia-ting which stands in the angle between the two rivers, the Ya and the Min.

Several water-gates adorn the walled river-front and at the first of these we landed. On our way to an inn, we met a procession going to welcome the Spring. The city magistrate was gorgeously clad in his official robes and furs and sat impassive on a sort of open chair, carried by many bearers. A crowd with long pheasant-tails, tinsel and brocades, over filthy rags, and with mud-caked forms and faces, accompanied him, together with a large guard of braves armed with the usual tridents, spears and antiquated muskets, the last of which they carried either by the barrel end or by the stock.

At the Canadian Mission I met Grant, who, having recovered from a touch of pneumonia, had come by boat from Cheng-tu. He did not look very fit, but in the cold damp weather it was not easy to throw off the effects of influenza, which we both seemed to have had. Besides the Canadian Mission, there were in Kia-ting, China Inland, and American Baptist Missions, several of the members of which I had already met. I heard also of Mr. Kerr, the railway engineer with whom I had travelled on the

Yangtsze. He was now on his way to the Kien-chang valley and at Ning-yuan would meet Captain Davies, who also was travelling for railway purposes.

The district all round Kia-ting is famous for the production of white-wax. The grubs of the insect are brought in the Spring from the Kien-chang valley by fleet carriers who travel by night, for if the grubs were exposed to the day temperature they would metamorphose into the insect stage. On arrival they are placed on a special kind of shrub, which they cover with white-wax scales, and these are collected in great quantities.

A particular kind of silk is made here, very pure, thick, soft, and durable. I purchased two pieces, each about 24 yards long and about 27 inches wide, which cost about 40 shillings apiece. I bought also a marvellous Chinese pocket-knife with half a score of blades and implements for about 8½d., the material and construction being of the very roughest. Few shops were open, however, and business would not be fully resumed till the 15th or 16th of the moon. The streets looked more or less deserted; the shop fronts were up, but they were decorated, some with large lanterns of waterproofed or oiled silk and paper, with characters thereon, and others with red cloth and tassels. All names and inscriptions had been renewed, and on the lintels of the doors were exhibited the visiting cards of callers—oblong pieces of red paper about 7 by 3½ inches, the characters being in black.

The sandstone cliffs in the neighbourhood of Kia-ting abound with caves which, burrowed into their steep faces, were probably dwellings so placed

for security in primitive times. Within the Canadian Mission ground was such a cave which had been discovered by men digging a well, and which I examined. It was perfectly dry except at one point where the roof was slightly damp. Both roof and sides showed the mark, apparently fresh, of the masons' tools, while there is no sign of smoke or use of fire in the fire-place. Perhaps it was just being made ready for use when by some successful attack the tribe to whom it belonged was wiped out; or some natural cataclysm—earthquake, or landslide, such as is not uncommon in so soft a formation close to a cutting river—may have covered over the entrance. The old entrance was gone, though it is possible that it had been obliterated in the building of that part of the town which now stands over it. The newer opening into the cave must in any case be very close to or have formed part of the old entry, as it leads at once to a contraction of the cave with long grooves both in floor and roof to take a door or gate.

An oblong chamber about 12 feet in length is entered, and at its end another contraction forms a second portal, probably intended for defence of the interior or main portion. Beyond this is the principal chamber, about 40 feet long, which, as it recedes, increases in width from about 4½ feet to 7 feet. Immediately to the left of one entering this chamber is a large recess, probably used as a sleeping place. Further in on the same side is one yet larger, about 6 feet in depth by 9 feet long, which perhaps afforded sleeping accommodation for a whole family. Still further in, on the opposite

side, was another. This was largely occupied by a huge trough hewn, like the recess, out of the solid rock, and divided by a longitudinal partition into two parts. It was not clear why it was divided, unless one part was intended to hold cereals and dry provisions and the other water. The outer showed signs of having contained water, but these might have been recent, and in fact looked so. At the extreme end of the cave and facing the entrance was a small recess containing a fire-place with neat arrangement for supporting two large pots, pointing to the conclusion that it would have been inhabited by more than one family.

The neatness of the stone work indicates that it was executed by a people possessed of iron tools, but the irregularity of the dimensions proves no very high degree of intelligence, and the mere fact of dwelling in such caves would seem to show that the race which inhabited them must have lived in pre-historic times.

The examination of a number of these cave-dwellings by some competent person might throw light on the subject, especially if some could be discovered to which the Chinese have not had access, as, adjacent to or within them, would be the kitchen middens, the *débris* in which would reveal the character and pursuits of the inhabitant race.

We had a picturesque walk along the thick but rather dilapidated wall on the land side of the town. It winds a good deal; at the flanking angles were gun emplacements, and the battlements were, as usual, machicolated. As a military work it is useless, and the town moreover is commanded both by the heights behind and by the bluffs on the opposite

side of the Min. Once upon a time its position at the angle of two large rivers was doubtless a commanding one. Now it is merely picturesque.

In the "soft accent" of Szechwan the name Kia-ting is pronounced "Jarding"; Ya-chau is pronounced "Yarjo"; Pau-ning, "Bowling," and Nan-pu, "Lambu."

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CHAPTER XVII.

KIA-TING TO CHUNG-KING

AFTER breakfast on February 5, the weather being raw and cold with a fresh wind blowing up-stream, we went on board the boat that was to take us down to Lu-chau. She was a good, roomy craft, about 40 feet long by 8 feet broad. For about two-thirds of her length she was roofed in with a curved roof of two thicknesses of matting. In the centre was a well about 12 feet long, with rough boards resting on the bottom timbers to keep one's feet out of the bilge water. This was shut off from the fore-deck by a sort of door or bulkhead, composed of a few rough boards with gaping chinks and an occasional chasm, through which one could view the scenery and take in fresh air.

Three or four men stood on this fore-deck and rowed in the usual futile manner. The aft part of the roofed-in portion was not shut off from the well, but the deck was at the same level as the fore-deck and underneath was stowage for stores and luggage. It terminated "*en plein air*," and offered a view of the scenery abaft and of the captain standing and wielding the tiller on the small deck at the stern.

On the left bank, just below the town and opposite the long spit of shingle thrown up at the confluence of the two rivers, we saw in a sort of natural embrasure, a colossal figure of Buddha some 300 feet high, hewn out of the cliff and partly overgrown with trees and shrubs. It looked fine, but I caught but an imperfect view of it, so rapidly were we swept past by a swirling current which twisted all ways.

The river valley remained wide and open for about 80 li, when low hills came down to the right bank, and the river continued to be thus flanked either on one side or on the other.

We tied up at a little place about 120 li from Kia-ting. By putting up a mat or two aft and keeping the charcoal brazier going we were tolerably warm and slept well.

Next day we descended with a fairly strong current, but the rapids were easy and not very numerous. Great islands of shingle and sometimes soil often divided it into two channels. Like most of the rivers here and elsewhere in China, the bed was very wide for the volume of water—in other words, the river was spread over so large an area that it not only wasted much land but itself became unnavigable. Confined within narrower bounds it would carve itself a deeper channel, and be therefore more rapidly navigated and more tranquil and free from rapids and violent currents. Were rivers not confined in this province by the adjacent hills, they would be as troublesome and devastating as are those in the northern provinces.

Nothing special characterised the scenery till

the afternoon, when a watery sun came out, and in the clearer air the great snow-clad ranges which run back from the right bank towards Mount O-mei, stood forth with all their nearer foothills and made a fine panorama against the setting sun. I began to understand why the traffic between Kia-ting and the Kien-chang valley goes all the way round by Ya-chau.

In walking across a big bend we came on a small factory where the iron pans used for cooking and for salt boiling were cast. It was interesting to observe that the metal was melted in a small firebrick-lined vessel not unlike a miniature Bessemer converter in appearance. The fuel was charcoal, and a blast was kept up by large box bellows worked by three or four men. The sparks flew out from the open top, and their colour argued considerable purity in the boiling metal. The vessel being pivoted could swing forward like a converter when the charge was ready, the discharge taking place through a nozzle, a little above the normal level of the molten metal. The metal of the cooking bowls being very thin, the moulds have to be kept very hot even during the process of pouring, I believe.

At 8 o'clock we tied up at Kiang-chu-chi—distance 170 li.

Next morning (February 7) after a three hours' voyage we were at half-past nine alongside the last gate of Sui-fu (or Su-chau), which lies on the north of the Yangtsze and west of the Min in the angle enclosed by these rivers. Opposite the east face, a high hill of inclined strata juts into the river, the extremity of a range running east-

wards. Its striking outline is emphasised by two very picturesque temples and some rock shrines perched high on it, overlooking the water.

Sui-fu has a population of some 50,000, and is a great distributing centre to Yunnan, besides being on the chief water highway to the Cheng-tu plain. It seems from its geographical position destined to be a much more important place than Chung-king, especially if the projected lines from Burmah and Annam come through it, as they probably will.

We landed on the steep bank and walked through the dirty, wet streets in the cold drizzle to the Inland Mission, where we found welcome letters waiting us, and where, after calling on Dr. Fanley of the American Baptist Mission, who was going to Ya-chau to assist Upcraft, we had a pleasant dinner. Our hosts were of opinion that although the Chinese of the better class showed much interest and inquiry as to foreign ways, it was not with the idea of adopting them. Later we visited the Missions étrangères françaises, hard by, and found the Abbé de G————, with whom we had but half-an-hour's chat. After leaving Peking, he had spent a month near Nagasaki, where he had formed no good opinion of the Japanese, though their Government had seemed as able and well informed as that of China was the reverse. Thence he had journeyed to Hanoi, and so into Yunnan by way of the Red River. After two days of very steep mountain work he had reached the uplands of Yunnan; crossing that province and then the Yangtsze at the mouth of the Ngan-ning River, he had come right up

the Kien-chang valley and over the mountain country to the north to Ya-chau. The journey had taken five weeks after crossing the frontier. This was no doubt the new and easy French route into Yunnan of which I had heard.

It was four o'clock when we pushed off again, and in a few minutes we were once more on the broad Yangtsze, a noble stream ranging from one-quarter to half-a-mile in width. The water was muddy, but lighter and clearer than we had found it coming up. The stream was now sluggish, and the rapids small and unimportant. The bank on one side was generally high or hills came down to it at an easy slope, while large shingle beds adorned the opposite side.

Our skipper continued the voyage as usual long after dark and got aground at the head of a small rapid, where we remained until some of the crew got overboard and pushed us off. We tied up at Li-chung, said to be 60 li below Sui-fu.

Next day we reached La-chi, 200 li down the Yangtsze, and the following morning (February 9) got down to Lu-chau, at the mouth of a small river running down from near Cheng-tu.

Our boat was chartered only as far as this place, and, as the skipper did not seem desirous of going on, we had to set to work to engage another. We met with no success at first, and had just decided to send to the Yamen and ask the magistrate to order our skipper to proceed (a high-handed but usual method) when another man came along and offered a larger boat, undertaking to start at once and to take us to Chung-king in three days for 10,000 cash (about 28 shillings).

This, after some higgling, he reduced to 8,000, on the understanding that our soldiers and the Yamen runners were not to squeeze him for food.

These soldiers or runners, generally the very scum of the place, receive an allowance of 150 cash per day for travelling expenses from the Yamen; but either it is not paid till their return, or they don't choose to load themselves with cash, so they squeeze the boat-owners and innkeepers on the way, and thus obtain lodging and food free. In addition, they expect the travellers to give them a sum per day to cover their expenses, which, as they put it, are so much greater when they are travelling!

One is obliged to have these roughs, for it is the magistrate's duty to send them. Their presence, being evidence of official protection, perhaps checks some evil-disposed people, but should trouble arise these fellows are perfectly useless, and either run away or go over to the enemy. There was no doubt, however, that in this province and probably in most other parts of China there was a very strong desire on the part of officials to avoid any trouble arising from molestation of foreigners during travel, and the word had been passed round among the people to be quiet.

We shifted to our new craft and got away soon after 2 p.m. She was of the type known as "Wu-pan"—a good deal bigger than the one we had left, being intermediate in size between it and a Kwat-zu. The crew occupied the fore-deck; then came a cabin about 20 by 8 feet, which we divided into two parts with mats and cotton curtains, giving the front to Mr. Hsia and the

boys and retaining the other, which had doors opening on to a small raised deck aft. These we could keep open at will, and thus afford ourselves a view. Of ventilation there was no lack.

By half-past seven, we had done about 120 li, arriving at a small town called Mi-tu-chwang.

On the foreshore of all these river-side places are erected during the New Year tall masts from the top of which two ropes are pendent, carrying a number of white lanterns with a red one at top. The foot of the mast is enclosed in a railing, with more lamps on a sort of altar, before which is a place for joss-sticks deposited by boatmen. These illuminated masts look very pretty at night.

Next forenoon we stopped to take in stores at Ho-Kiang on the south bank, where a small river from Kwei-chau enters the Yangtsze. The Yangtsze river was about at its lowest, and the steep banks were slimy with the passage of the water carriers. Temporary mat buildings and stalls of various sorts on foreshore supplied the wants of the boat population.

During the day's voyage the river was broad and easy, with occasional minor rapids; the banks and low hills were green with the growing crops and the farmhouses were buried in clusters of bamboo and banyans. Large towns and villages succeeded one another rapidly. The formation was of sand-stone, reefs of it running into and partly across the river.

We went on till 8 o'clock and then tied up at Pei-tze after having travelled 240 li, according to the skipper. These distances by water are difficult to check; for the current is very un-

equal, the crew are not always rowing, and, even when they are, the quality of their work is variable.

The town is an important one. The shore was decorated and bands of Chinese musicians were playing in the falsetto staccato fashion in which the Chinese sing. The instruments were small monotonous drums and pipes, somewhat akin to the Scotch instrument of torture. Fireworks and dragon processions added to the festivities. The filthy, sloppy, dark streets did not invite us to go sight-seeing as Mr. Hsia was afraid we should be tempted to do. The place is a hotbed of the Hol-a-wei secret society, the members of which go about openly wearing its white badge, and the authorities are afraid to do their duty in suppressing them. China is at all times honeycombed with secret societies, but during recent years the weakness of the Government seemed to have caused an unusual amount of lawless banding together.

Long before dawn guns were fired, and soon after the band returned and recommenced operations, but we could not start, for there was a fog, and when it had lifted the captain was wanting. This was his town; he had gone home, and no doubt was sleeping off the night's dissipation.

However, when, shortly after nine, we got away the sun came out bright and warm, and it was quite enjoyable to sit at the stern and bask in its rays once more and try and get rid of the overpowering cold, which it was impossible to shake off amid continual draughts.

The broad open valley with its fine cultivation, the sloping ranges with sandstone cliffs at top and the great river between, dotted with craft, were

pleasant to the eye after weeks of grey gloom. In the afternoon we came to a short pass, the mountain on one side of which was covered with orange farms. We landed and walked along a narrow, winding, stony path on the hill-side embowered in orange trees, so that the ground below was chequered with light and shade. The soil was red and rich, and a catch crop of broad beans in full flower was growing under the trees, making the air sweet and pleasant. Below on the left we had glimpses of the shining river between the grey tree-boles, and above on the right caught sight now and again of steep red crags and scaurs above the orange belt. Most of the fruit had been plucked, but occasionally we came on patches of untouched trees, so thickly laden that the rich red-orange colour seemed to prevail over the dark-green leaves. Water trickled down the hill-sides and made all moist and luxuriant, and through a vista of trunks and foliage we spied from time to time neat little, half-timbered, whitewashed farmhouses, with a glowing wealth of orange peel hung out to dry.

Beyond the woods, about a mile long, we descended to a short fertile plain leading to the grey walls of the town of Kiang-tsin, towards the far end of which rose picturesque and beautifully coloured green and orange tiled roofs and pagodas of temples amidst fine large trees. On reaching the gate we skirted the wall on the land side and made for an obvious bend of the river on our right. For a mile at least we went along the side of a steep shingle beach, in part covered with scanty grass and multitudinous graves, in part quite bare.

Either the Yangtsze must once have run at a

much higher elevation and has left this monument of its former existence, or else, in pre-historic times, it must have been an infinitely mightier river than it now is.

When we reached the river we walked to the lower side of the city wall to meet the "Wu-pan," and embarked just opposite a steep hill on the left bank, crowned with a tall white pagoda.

We tied up at a little place called Pei-sha-to, having travelled 150 li.

We were now not far from Chung-king, and next day when we were within sight of the town we became impatient for news. Soon the bluff on which Chung-king is situate became visible, and behind the town the European-built French and American Consulates loomed big against the sky line. Small rapids helped us along quickly, and we landed on a large shingle-bed just above the town. Beyond was a dirty backwater and, behind this, a very steep and long flight of stone stairs led up the bluff. From the stagnant dirty backwater, carriers were taking up buckets of water for the town supply, while from the town others were bringing down buckets, brim full of filthy sewage. There is no avoiding the disagreeables of an approach to a Chinese town.

We went straight to the Inland Mission, where we saw Mr. and Mrs. Willett, and learned that Matheson was staying at the house of a wealthy Chinese merchant, Mr. Yang, who was addicted to foreign ways and had rooms in his "hong" which (as we were given to understand) he let to foreigners.

It took us half-an-hour to get across the town,

which, after the capital, is the largest in the Province. The shops were all closed, and their fronts decorated with lanterns and with new inscriptions. A form of decoration which we had not seen elsewhere, consisting of the ends of fir twigs, covered with a net-work of gaily-coloured paper, the dark-green pine needles showing through the reticulations, was much in vogue here.

At Mr. Yang's "hong," which, compared with our recent quarters, was quite a splendid place, we obtained two rooms on the first floor, with glazed windows, a solid stone floor, and some decent furniture. Beyond our room was a spacious hall, facing the oblong well or courtyard to both storeys, and containing very elaborate ancestral tablets, before which incense and joss-sticks and candles were generally burning. In the early morning and evening when a deep-toned bell sounded for a few minutes, with a crescendo accompaniment beaten on a drum and varied with a discharge of crackers in the lower courtyard, some one appeared and kowtowed before the tablets.

I remained at Chung-king for the next fortnight, during the first three days of which I kept myself within doors hoping to get rid of my cold, and devoting my leisure to the Shanghai newspapers, which, though more than a month old, were full of interest. At tiffin on one of these days we had Mr. Laughton, a missionary, lately come from Kan-su, where he had spent a number of years. His account of this far western province with its fringe of nomadic tribes on the north and west was very interesting. Of some parts he gave a good account as a game

country. If you enter the province by the route leading from Lung-ngan to Lan-chau you put up by the roadside ducks, geese, common and golden pheasants, partridges, musk-deer, leopards and great grey wolves, the last being very numerous and bold, particularly since the recent Mohammedan rising and its suppression. If you travel by the more westerly pass above Sung-pan, you are in an equally good game country with the additional excitement of being held up perhaps by bands of Tibetans, armed with breech-loaders, and of finding it very much of a No-man's land as you go along.

While we were at Chung-king Europeans were unusually numerous in the town, and when the sun shone out—an event so rare that the natives said it caused the dogs to bark—we began to pay our visits. Mr. Willett had already given us much assistance and now he not only extended to us his hospitality, but made himself exceedingly useful in facilitating arrangements respecting finance, the fixing of routes, the engagement of coolies, and the laying in of supplies. Mr. Davidson of the Friends' Mission, who had formed an unfavourable opinion of the Chinese, had, nevertheless, begun a photographic school which was proving successful. He had a studio, and printing and developing rooms, and a store for the sale of cameras and materials on a large scale. His Chinese assistant gave me prints, very creditably executed, of some negatives which I had developed there. The Chinese like to be photographed in full face, with a strong light on both cheeks, and the flesh tints as light and waxy as possible.

I dined with Mr. Murray of the Scotch Bible

Society, a man who had travelled far and wide in these western provinces and who gave us much useful information. He agreed that a railway line from Burmah through Bhamo and Tali-fu was impracticable because of the terrific parallel chasms of the three great rivers near the frontier, but said that the more southerly route from Kunlung Ferry had been described to him as practicable, though not easy.

Other missionaries whom we met were Mr. Rowe, Mr. Lewis of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, who gave me information concerning the route to Cheng-tu, and old friends, the Polhills, Taylors and others from Sui-ting and Pau-ning.

By February 18, the shops were opening and gave evidence of the wealth and prosperity of this great city of 250,000 inhabitants. The bluff on which it stands is at the extremity of the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Kialing, the "little" river, with the Yangtsze, the "great" river, which flows past in a strong whirling current. The river was now nearly at its lowest and looked about 600 yards wide, but in summer it is nearly double that breadth. We went to the main river-front and having descended the wet and slippery steps, crossed to the opposite shore. Prominent among the buildings there stood the "hong" of Mr. Archibald Little, whose name is well-known in connection with his plucky efforts to open up steam navigation on the Upper Yangtsze.

On the tops of steep conical hills were the bungalows of a few of the Europeans, among them that of Mr. Hancock of the Standard Oil Company, whose business was transacted through

Mr. Yang. Mr. Hancock had invited us to tiffin and, after climbing steep stone stairs and other ascents with fine scenery in view, and with streams and rest-houses shaded by banyan trees never far off, we reached the bungalow in about an hour and a half. Among the guests was Mr. Fraser, the British Consul, whose bungalow adorned an adjacent peak, the Union Jack floating at the summit. Peaks were in demand for bungalows, and fortunately were plentiful.

Fraser was very severe on the Chinese, among whom he had passed his life. He considered them as immensely overrated and as possessing very little enterprise and ability, but he seemed to me to make too little of the better features in their character.

Having sat long listening to his talk, we set out by a different route and passed fine temples, copses with a large proportion of deciduous timber, hill-side grave-yards with dark cone-shaped cypresses, and hedges of a pretty wild-rose tree. Lower down, the air was sweet with flowering beans, and the poppies were beginning to shoot and "make" themselves as gardeners say. We paid some other visits, and there was further delay in finding our boatmen. Then the current took us down to a lower gate than the one we had crossed from. We landed on a shingle bank from which we had to cross to the shore, with the aid of a dim lantern, by a long narrow plank bridge under which the water was rushing audibly. When we had climbed half-way up the steep bank, we found that the bridge was being repaired and we had literally to "walk the plank" —a narrow one shored up close to the vertical

wall, across a gap of about 30 yards. As I groped gingerly over it my mind wandered to "Gertrude of Wyoming"—"deep roared the unnavigable gulf below"—and, once over, I think my knees shook a little. Next we were confronted with a closed gate where our "ting-chai" bellowed and we banged on the door, but, though only a few paces off we could hear the voices of the guard within, we received no reply. Our lantern candle burned out and left us in the dark with a chasm behind and a closed iron-studded gate in front. After ten minutes of entreaty, and expostulation we heard voices addressing us; then the gate was opened an inch or two; we slipped in at once and others mysteriously slipped out with equal rapidity. The guard were smoking opium and gambling in the gate-house; the folks inside who wished to get out had opened the gate, and we, having entered, barred the gate and went on our way rejoicing.

When it was decided that Matheson and Grant should proceed into Kwei-chau province and that I should return to Cheng-tu, it was necessary (February 22) to re-arrange our stores and effects. Then I went to the Custom House and asked Mr. N. to buy for me a Kwei-chau pony, a request with which he kindly complied, obtaining for me a hardy little animal costing 18 taels (52 shillings). Later in the day I arranged for coolies for our journeys, and then dined with the Commissioner of Customs, in whose company I met the British and French Consuls and the Assistant Commissioner. The *menu* was a curiosity as, in China, such things usually are, owing to their quaintness and the occasional phonetic use of Chinese idiographs. The

date, the 22nd, of the month, was expressed thus: 2 + 10 + 2, followed by an allusion to "ritual-praying" and the word "four" indicating that the 22nd of the month was the fourth day (Thursday) after the day of prayer (Sunday). The symbols which denoted "roast pigeon" were used phonetically only, their meaning being "send that girl," but "roast pheasant" was described by idiographs meaning "roast hill-chicken." "Mince pie" was expressed phonetically by characters which sounded "Mien-tsu-pai."

Chinese is a curiously cumbrous language, but those Europeans who really study it and become scholars find much to admire—the simple grammar, the grace with which it lends itself to poetry and to metaphor, and also, some say, to correctness of expression in mathematics.

One day (February 24) we had a big tiffin party, including the Captains of two gun-boats and a navy-surgeon, who recalled having seen our start at Ichang, and asked if we had not our ensign hoisted with the Jack upside down. I recollected that when I noticed it I said: "Those gun-boat chaps are sure to have spotted it."

Captain W—— estimated the current in the New Rapid at its worst part at 13 knots, and said that even if they had 18-knot boats they would not attempt the most difficult rapids without having hawsers out. He did not take an optimistic view of mercantile steam navigation of the Upper Yangtsze, as a paying thing.

When we discovered that Mr. Yang would take no payment for the use of his rooms, we presented him with a "sparklet" bottle and equipment,

and with a spare "compactum" chair, to which he had taken a great fancy, and he seemed much pleased. Next day he made us return presents of three pieces of silk and a box of choice tea. He is a very enlightened Chinaman and one who would welcome progress, but between the merchant and official classes there is no sympathy, and the views of the former do not prevail.

On Sunday (February 25) Grant and I availed ourselves of Mr. Fraser's invitation to tiffin at his bungalow, and we sat down, a record company of Britishers (excluding missionaries), to an *al fresco* tiffin, with the Union Jack waving at the peak of the conical hill just above us among the firs. Thirteen we were, *absit omen!*

Afterwards some of the party started for a climb up to a high peak hard by, on which is one of the walled enclosures often found in this province, and built as strongholds for villagers in troublous times.

There was a rumour that our fellow traveller on the *Empress*, Kang-yu-weh, had been assassinated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHUNG-KING TO CHENG-TU.

GRANT having gone off by himself to work up a little river to the west, Matheson and I set about the completion of preparations for starting. There were farewell visits to be made, advances to be given to coolie "hongs," with the usual long discussion, stores to be weighed and separated into packages of the right weight, and many other things to be done, every one of which, owing to the variety of weights and coinage, required here ten times as much attention and time as would be wanted elsewhere.

Our servants before separating had had a grand carousal, some eight of them plus all their satellites, leeches and parasites such as surround every Chinaman who has any sort of job from which there are pickings to be had. They had kept it up till near midnight, and now in consequence were as owlish and mulish as they could be.

Besides five baggage coolies to accompany me, I had to engage six to convey direct to Cheng-tu my boxes of stores, a ten days' job for which each man gets 4,000 cash (10 shillings), or rather he will get about two-thirds of it—the rest going to the "hong"

and the "fu-to." In order to avoid the examination of the cases en route by the li-kin people, we obtained for a trivial sum from the Consulate, transit passes (Tung-tiao), which being pasted on the boxes secure them from being molested. This is a concession to the foreigner.

It was a little after 10 on the morning of February 27 when Matheson and I started, Mr. Willett, who had certainly put himself to much trouble to help us, having come to see us off.

We walked along the street together, came to a cross road and, separating, went our several ways. The weather was dull and leaden, but the approaches of the city were not unpleasant. The steep hills, covered with grass-grown grave mounds, rose in pleasant ridges from the rivers on either hand, and at 15 li out the rocks were picturesque. Beggars abounded, and a couple of bearers passed by with a dead man lashed to two bamboos, a cloth being laid over him. He had died away from home and his body was being taken back, with a live cock tied on top to keep his spirit from wandering by the way and getting captured by the evil spirits with which this country abounds.

We reached a village fortress over 1,300 feet up, and then we dropped down to the plain over very broken ground, by a stone causeway and stairs, up and down which the active, surefooted, little Kwei-chau ponies with their riders on their backs scrambled like cats.

On much of the ground was opium, which had grown during the past few weeks so that the buds were just beginning to show. Rape in flower, peas,

winter wheat, and beans with purple flowers, made up the crops.

Our first halt was at 3 o'clock, at Sheng-kiao, 40 li, where, waiting in the dark, cheerless inner room of the inn, I tramped up and down. A big dog of the place shewed his dislike of the foreigner by laying hold of my leg which was somewhat protected by my stout canvas gaiters, but one fang went through and the pressure of the others gave me a long lacerated bruise. Before I could turn round he was off. There were hordes of such dogs, utter mongrels—hideous, slouching, furtive-looking, vicious, cowardly brutes. I never saw a Chinaman caress or speak to one.

Immediately on leaving this town we began the ascent of a range or rather a double range of parallel hills of sandstone formation, the nearer being a row of steep cones, the further higher but more rounded and with easier slopes. The summit of this pass was at 2,100 feet, the scenery rather fine, but here a Scotch mist came on and spoilt all.

Riding in advance of my escort I found the children running after me calling out "Ta," and the men indulging in coarse remarks. The presence of soldiers has a wholesome effect on the worse class in Chinese towns.

The absolute indifference of the Chinese to dirt and their inability to understand our dislike of it were shewn by the following incidents. In the morning one of the boys brought in the kettle of water and, looking about for something to pour it into, seized on the small bowl which I had just used for washing my teeth. When I told him to clean it first, he dipped it into the basin of water in which

I had washed my face and soaped my hands, gave it a shake, and brought it to me virtuously. The examination of cooking utensils and baskets for provisions revealed such a state of general dirt in the servants' department that I scolded them. When Mr. Hsia afterwards suggested that, as some of the baskets were rather dirty for carrying provisions, it would be well to have some new ones, I assented. Imagine my sensations when I found him calmly superintending the packing of the dirty pots and pans in the clean baskets and the food in the dirty old ones—greasy Chinese candles, which melt almost if you look at them, were put totally unprotected into baskets containing bread, etc. !

Just before dark a snipe crossed the road and dropped a few yards beyond, the first I had seen in the Province. Many men were carrying baskets of newly-hatched chickens, another sign of spring.

We made the ascent of a range of hills in rain and Scotch mist which completely veiled the fine views near the top, and, what was of more moment, prevented our getting a comprehensive survey of the country. The dark pines with their outlines softly blurred, and the faint outlines of steep brown slopes behind, made a picture such as the Japanese love to portray. The ascent and descent were brief but steep ; then came a short bit of level and another chain of peaks with a beautiful ravine, down which we went.

Sandstone, with a quick "dip" to the strata, was the formation, but with it, in places, were large embedded nodules of limestone, streaked with quartz, and having a calcareous coating to their

water-worn surface. These were being used by lime-burners. A number of small "adits" on the slopes shewed the presence of coal, and I looked at one mine giving 15 tons per day of good hard coal. In two years they had worked 2,000 Chinese feet inwards from the mouth of the adit, the seam but 20 or 24 inches thick; price at the pit one cash per catty.

Lower down was a small factory for making common rice-bowls. The fine yellow sandstone which, with a sort of poor China clay, formed the "biscuit," was being pounded in a number of stone mortars by pestles, worked by cams driven by overshot water-wheels.

It was 2.40 before we got into Teng-kia-hou, 50 li, and 4.15 before we left, after wasting time in trying to get the ponies shod, two of them having cast two shoes and other shoes being loose, though the ponies had been shod two days before. In pulling up my pony, I broke the bridle, a brand new one, at the bit ring. Saddle, bridle and all it is true had cost only ten shillings.

For three days I was in a state of badly suppressed rage at the iniquities of the servants, coolies and mafoos. One morning one of the mafoos bolted, having returned the ruck-sack containing my waterproof, which he had been carrying, but annexing Hsia's silk umbrella. No doubt Hsia had been squeezing him, and this was his revenge; but he was soon captured and brought back.

Hsia had *very* big pay for a Chinaman of his position, $100 per month, but I had reason to believe that he had been squeezing heavily from the first, although it was hard to confront him with

proof. Most of our coolie troubles had so arisen, and it seemed that the coolie "hong" at Chung-king wanted to have nothing more to do with us on his account. Therefore I began to do things as much as possible myself and avoided allowing him to engage or buy things. I envied the way in which he, in common with other Chinamen, kept his temper and preserved the sweetest calmness when I scolded him. All the same, when Chinamen get ruffled—as they do over quite little things among themselves—they "lose their hair" completely and behave more like children than men, and the number of words and length of time they can spend in abuse are marvellous.

If there is one thing more than another which the missionary in China requires it is equanimity. To put up with the dirt, the deceit, and the general badness of the Chinese, when one is thrown into incessant contact with them, demands an amount of patience and of good temper which not many men possess, and it is a great deal to the credit of the missionaries that they do seem in many cases to exercise a marvellous command over themselves. Quick temper and roughness, even at times to the extent of sternness, may not be amiss; geniality and occasional good humour may carry one along on the whole; but, for comfort to the possessor and for influence over the people, a constant, generous, forbearing, and really amiable temperament is the best gift.

All this I affirm after having roundly boxed a Chinaman's ears—very fat and flabby was his cheek—for no greater fault than that of gaping and staring at me, with a crowd of others, when I was

hungry; provoked that they would not clear out when I said "pu-yaa" with concentrated feeling.

The first day of March was miserable from first to last with mist and rain. For 20 li we plodded between water-covered rice fields, on the banks of which were bean crops and numerous patches of opium and wheat. Then the road rose in steep flights of stairs, 150 feet or more, to the gates of the small town of Ta-yeng-cheng, whence I could see the cook, boy, and mafoo, trotting gaily over the very rough stone causeway and not even dismounting for the steep hills. When they came up I gave the nags a feed, and, after waiting vainly three-quarters of an hour for the coolies, went on breakfastless.

For some 20 li our way lay along one of the curious plateaux found in this formation, and then dropped to the lower level. Another 10 li brought us at noon to the walled prefectural town of Yung-chwan, whence I pushed on, making a light lunch on horseback off three mandarin oranges and two sticks of chocolate.

The causeway, some six to eight feet wide, was of flags in the middle, and of oblong slabs at the sides, but both flags and slabs were utterly neglected, and dangerous to man and beast. Yet this was the great trunk road of the Province between its two principal towns!

Passing over many shoulders of foot-hills apparently thrown off from some larger system, we struck a rapid little river which runs to Ho-chau, showing that we were still in the basin of the Kia-ling. The banks, clothed with bamboo groves, the succession of pools and rock-ledges in the course of

the stream, and the pine-clad hills, were a pleasant change after the paddy-fields.

At a small town which stood on both banks, we crossed this river by a covered bridge, and then stopped at 2.40 for the day at the village of Huang-ku-spu, on the heights. Day's march, 82 li.

Bran and straw had to be sent for from the town and chopped by hand-knives, so that it was just two hours after getting in when the ponies had their "chow." About 4 o'clock my coolies came up, and I was glad to get some breakfast myself.

There were extensive orange groves in the neighbourhood of Yung-chwan. The streets and the road leading to the town were thronged with coal porters, bringing very good large coal from two large mines some 30 li off. We passed these mines afterwards, but road and weather were so bad that I did not visit them.

I met an old man in his straw rain-coat, leading an ox laden with 180 catties (about two cwt.). He informed me that he bought the coal at the pit for rather less than a cash per catty and sold it in the city for two cash. Thus his gross profit for the day's work would be about 6d. and the cost of the coal eight to ten miles from the pit about five shillings per ton, every small increase of distance after that doubling the cost.

Our next day's journey lay among paddy-fields and confused low hills which more than ever irritated me with their "damnable iteration."

I heard Dr. Logan Jack, the well-known Queensland geologist, say, soon after arriving in Szechwan, that he was tired of the ever recurring sandstone formation, and I understood the feeling. One point

in favour of the formation is the rich soil the decomposed sandstone gives—but how weary one becomes of the niggling little plats of cultivation! Another point in its favour is coal, abundance of good, firm, large clean coal, which if transport were less costly would be largely used here.

I saw one curious application of coal. Often in the Province I had noticed earthenware cooking pots curiously resembling iron ones in colour and shape. Here I came across a small factory of them. The clay is mixed with coal dust, which they say prevents its cracking. The pots are dried, then heated on an open hearth under which a powerful blast is kept up, then put into chambers and rapidly raised to a white heat; then they are taken out and placed in closed chambers to cool off gradually.

During the day I noticed a large white water-buffalo, and on asking whether its sire or dam was white and hearing that the sire was, I learned also that the Chinese will not eat the meat of the white buffalo, and further that a large number of Chinese will not eat the flesh of oxen at all, because, as explained by Mr. Hsia, they "give pity" to animals used in husbandry. He was aware that the Brahmins will not eat beef for religious reasons which, he said, do not apply at all in this case. He also mentioned that some Chinese, not Mahometans, will not eat pork, because they believe that pigs were their ancestors! He ridiculed the idea that rats are eaten.

Another incident of the day was the passing of a small procession going to perform rites at a grave. A man in front carried a tray with paper cash, chopsticks, and a steaming kettle of sam-shee, to be used

for libations; behind came three or four musicians, and lastly a priest in a handsome silk-embroidered gown clashing a pair of cymbals.

We passed through a wide gap in a range running from north-north-east to south-south-west. For 30 li our road went up and down hills 100 to 200 feet high, and once or twice passed the higher waters of the little river we had crossed the evening before.

The next 60 li were easier, but the country was still much confused and I was not aware that we were crossing the water-shed between the east and west drainage systems till, just outside the west end of the large walled town of Yung-chang, we struck a considerable river, an affluent of the Fu-sung-ho, which flows into the Yangtsze at Lu-chau. Numerous boats were plying on its broad still water. Its course was very winding—three times as long as by road, said the natives, though Chinese roads are always on the curve.

My day's march was one continual worry, bad roads, horse-shoes cast, mafoos troublesome, no straw, and no help from any one. Hsia, because I had stopped his chances of peculation, seemed stupid on purpose—and no people can be more obtuse than Chinese when they choose.

Our stopping places and distances for the day were: Tai-ping-tsien, 15 li; Fung-kau-pu, 30 li; passed Yung-chang 30 li, and reached Meng-tse-kiao 20 li.

The really lovely morning (March 3) after heavy rain would have been quite cheering, if only the ponies had not continued to cast their shoes. By midday they had got rid of eleven and it was impossible to get the animals shod. In the course of

the morning we passed through half-a-dozen towns and villages, but at one the smiths did not shoe horses; at another they had no shoes made; at a third the iron stores had run out of iron, and so on, although we were on a main road with a not inconsiderable mule and pony traffic! Some of the inns had stables and some not, but at none could we procure straw, or bran, or beans. These had to be bought in the town. In the same way the inns provide no food save rice, no fire, and no light save that of a rush-wick in a saucer of oil. If you require food, candles, charcoal, etc., you must go out and buy; only the cooking is provided, for which "small money" must be paid.

I had thought that vested interests, conservatism, and the general disregard of public and private convenience characteristic of the country accounted for this state of matters, but I now inclined to believe that the Chinaman grudged the intermediate profit which the inn-keeper would make. It is very hard to get to the bottom of things.

At our breakfast place there were many shops selling rather neat glazed brown ware, made close by. Often by the roadside we heard the clack of looms, where towels and coarse cotton piece-goods were woven neatly enough. At a little roadside house a man was painting large strips of paper with dragons and conventional ornaments for superstitious uses. On every door the Chinese have coloured drawings of hideous mythical beings who act as guardians of the house portals. Wealthy people, when there is no wall opposite the doorway of their house, put up a blank wall to keep the devil out. Such walls, painted with evil-looking dogs,

dragons, tigers and the like, face all official yamens. People are constantly being "possessed." When any one is ill, gongs have to be banged the whole time to keep the noxious spirits at bay. The dying are taken "*in articulo mortis*" out of their beds and placed in a chair at the doorway so that the devils may have free exit. The number of roadside shrines for images in this Province alone must be counted by tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands.

Our road was, and for three days had been, over a vast plain of hillocks, the true level altering hardly at all. The plain was populous and studded with farms (many of them growing opium), small and large villages, crowded market-towns, and big prefectural walled cities or "hsien." Along the main provincial road passed swarms of foot-passengers, chair-passengers, coolies with loads of paper, salt, pottery, and mule trains laden with silk piece-goods. Coal was abundant everywhere, and near every town we met numbers of pack animals and coolies carrying loads of it.

Steep mountain ranges of no great width rise out of the plain, but soon disappear. All have a north to north-easterly trend and lie parallel with one another.

Twenty li over easy but gently undulating ground brought us at 8.15 to San-fou-tang; then we travelled 60 li slowly verging towards a mountain range, which we at length crossed through a low gap crowned with a fine pagoda and with picturesque paitans at the entrance to the big walled town of Lung-chang. It was dark when, 20 li further on, we reached Ying-hsiang-kai, where I had to dispossess a party of Chinese of the room I

ONE OF MY SOLDIER GUARD.

obtained. Another room would have served me equally well, but had I not taken the principal room, word would have been passed round the town that the foreigner was a very low-down sort of person, and one has to be on one's guard to prevent such misconceptions.

Next morning we reached Sheng-feng-yi after doing 30 li. To pass the time I conversed with the soldier who had accompanied me from Cheng-tu to Ya-chau, a big, good-natured young fellow, with his wits about him.

His pay he told me was three taels per month (under nine shillings), with uniform, and he had to keep himself. He only, however, received about a quarter of his pay monthly, the balance being paid three times a year. He said that there were five companies of soldiers in Chung-king, each about 300 strong and that they were drilled twice a day, in the morning in Chinese fashion, in the afternoon in foreign fashion, *i.e.*, German, though the instructors were Chinese; and that they practised firing at an enormous target at about 300 yards.

After another 30 li we reached Pai-mu-tsien, a market-town on the Fu-kiang, which we crossed. For 15 li there was a really decent narrow paved road, over which we gaily trotted, and then a final 15 li along the bank of the river brought us to the large town of Nei-kiang. The coolies arrived very soon after, being anxious for some reason of their own to have a good time here. The soldiers had a wash and a shave and put on new red uniforms, and there seemed a general air of excitement in the camp.

All day we had gloomy grey sky over-head, and sandstone formation and paddy-fields round us. At

one place, the hill-sides had a pleasant look and on consideration I found the reason to be that the paddy-fields were not under water but that the warm red earth was being ploughed.

It was easy-going all the way, though, three days before, the head coolie or " fu-to," had told me it was a bad and mountainous region, and to make up for anticipated loss of time on it, had asked permission to do rather more than the contract stages on earlier days. The lie had its purpose and, like other lies, " it served for the time."

At a cottage door we saw three children, seated at a little table gravely playing cards, the eldest not more than four and the others about three and two respectively. They were so engrossed that I had almost completed my preparations to photograph them a few feet off when they looked up and promptly left the scene. Another small boy whom I wished to " take " by the roadside, wept so bitterly that I had to desist.

On the river-bank below the town were a few brine wells going to a greater depth than those I had seen elsewhere, and necessitating the use of a large horizontal drum moved by buffaloes for winding up the long bamboo bucket. The bamboo rope was carried over a wooden pulley above the shaft and passed to the drum. We were now but little to the eastward of the great salt district, where natural gas is used for evaporating the brine.

We crossed (March 5) the river below the town to the left bank, then struck inland by a stone road seldom more than three feet wide, passed through a small market-town and stopped, 20 li on, at a wretched hamlet called Lu-yui-chwang, where I

breakfasted in a room which had an appalling smell, apparently not disliked by the Chinese. Walking one day when the air was perfumed with the honey-sweet scent of the yellow rape in flower, I remarked on its fragrance. "Yes," said Mr. Hsia, "it is a very bad smell."

A long stage of 40 li, unbroken by even a village, took us to a small market-town picturesquely perched on a hill, but utterly filthy within. When I left, the whole population crowded outside and watched me as long as I was in sight in the usual stolid fashion. A still longer stage of 60 li brought us to another filthy hole with bad accommodation, my window being merely a barred opening overlooking a stream which was a common sewer.

The morning mists had turned first to haze and then to blue sky and light clouds, while, a rare thing in Szechwan, a pleasant breeze blew and rustled the leaves of the trees, and there was the feeling of spring in the air. The birds were making melody, in the rape and sweet bean flowers the bees were humming busily, and the song of the frog was heard. I saw one poppy in flower, but it was clearly a self-sown one. All the way from Chung-king poppy-cultivation had been enormous, but it began to decrease as we left the river. Much pleasant, bare, brown earth was being ploughed up for the sugar-cane, sweet potato, and other crops, the rude wooden plough being drawn by the mighty but leisurely buffalo.

While I was dreaming and trotting along over the yard-wide causeway with paddy-fields a foot deep in water on each side, my nag must have shied at something, for at once we were in the water;

but he promptly scrambled up to the road again and I kept my seat right through. He was a nice little animal, said to be a biter, but I found him good-tempered enough, and he took white lump sugar, which the other ponies refused.

On March 6, our first stage was to Kwan-yia-kiao, 60 li, and the next to Ngan-yo, 30 li.

An examination of this curious Central Szechwan formation confirmed a growing belief that there is no system of surface drainage over a great part of the area; the basins are closed and the water gets away by percolation through the sandstone; there is also an enormous evaporation from the vast surface of the paddy-fields. The river systems are probably chiefly affected by the storm-water, or that off the mountain ranges on the borders of the Province.

To have some idea of the system, imagine a number of star-fish set on the ground roughly so that their spines are connected with one another without interruption, the star-fishes being of unequal sizes, and rings of them, surrounding other rings, partly concentric, of less height, smaller ones being inside these, and so on. By means of the limbs or spines of unequal lengths with bosses along the crests, there is easy access from one height to another without descending into depressions; but, in other respects the illustration is quite inadequate. The scene is too monotonous for description. When the time comes for a regular survey of the region, melancholia and madness will be the doom of those who undertake the task.

Our valley narrowed towards the end between rugged walls of stone from which big boulders had fallen. Then came a short steep rise of 250 feet

METHOD OF CARRYING LIVE PIGS.

from the level. The ponies negotiate this sort of thing like cats; they are used to it, and their shoulders are very strong and projecting in consequence.

I climbed the kopje at the top, another 50 feet, and surveyed a wide area of similar summits in every direction, forming circles within circles, while narrow elliptical basins radiated from each, very steep and craggy at their upper ends. We wound round a high hill near its crest, among a profusion of loose-limbed, feathery cypresses, and obtained a grand view down one of the valleys which ran between two immense spines till it struck another and still larger valley at right angles, beyond which was what looked like a continuous range but probably was not. Still further on we used another big spine by which to descend to the plain 600 feet below. Then we had an easy run on the flat along the banks of a small sluggish river, which flows into the Kia-ling above Ho-chau. So we had again crossed the divide between the river systems east and west of a line struck north and south through Cheng-tu.

The towns were few and very far between in these parts and the hamlets most wretched, mere mud huts with thatch roofs, all filth being flung out into the street where dogs and pigs were the only scavengers. One never sees a Chinaman caress a horse or a dog and seldom a child, but small pigs I often saw petted and rubbed by the people, and here I noticed a good dame with one on her lap, most diligently freeing it from vermin.

Charles Lamb's story of how the Chinese came to like roast pork has this foundation, that the pig is lodged at the back of the house under its roof, the

sties in these parts being placed either exactly over or alongside the huge open cesspits, so that if the house is burnt piggy becomes roast pork ; but they don't cook him that way, or roast him at all as far as I ever saw.

In rainy weather we accomplished, on March 7, 90 li, very long ones, breakfasting at Liang-fung-ya, and then walking through mire or picking our way down slippery stone stairways, till we reached Tu-kiao-pu, where we found that every inn was filled with pilgrims. As Mr. Hsia would not take on himself to clear out any of these occupants from their rooms, and as the soldiers were miles behind, we had to stand in the street while people gathered round and jeered. When I told Hsia to find out where the head-man lived and go and demand assistance, he said that there was no head-man, that the people wouldn't say where he lived, that he lived five miles away, and finally that he had died two weeks before and that his successor was not yet appointed. When I persisted that he should obtain for me an interview with the " pucka " head-man, I was, after some delay, informed that the worthy in question had assigned quarters to me in the village temple. So to the temple we went, where, walking up and down the long, damp, clay floor, destitute of furniture save for the great grotesque idols dimly seen by a small oil cresset, I awaited the result of the high-pitched conversation between Hsia and the priests. At last I was informed that there was a small room belonging to one of the priests, but that he declined to let me use it. I said " certainly," and of course he then promptly agreed, the whole difficulty being a matter of a few cash,

not that it would have made any difference in what they charged me.

The priest's room was a den indeed, very small and occupied by a bed with filthy, mouldy mosquito-curtains, two stools, and a collection of lumber and agricultural effects. However, any port in a storm ; I was able to warm my feet, and at 10.30, one of the coolies having arrived, I supped off coffee and bread and butter, and very good the supper was. Then, putting my feet into a ruck-sack and covering myself with a *Times* and a mackintosh, I lay down ; but rats fought and squealed and played games in the lumber, or ran over the bed ; a chorus of frogs at the back of my head made a night of it in honour of the rainfall ; and, besides, it was too cold for one to become quite forgetful, and I was glad when, just before dawn, the monks rang bells, small and large, and thumped big wooden drums.

We started at 6.35 to do the 30 li into Sui-ning, and I pushed the nag on all I could so as to arrive in time for breakfast. But the road was awful, and was encumbered with pilgrims wending their way to worship at the shrines of the goddess of mercy, whom the Szechwanese claim as a native of Sui-ning. Several other places in China advance similar claims, and as it much encourages local traders such as inn-keepers, candle and joss-stick makers, priests, and beggars, the contention is convenient. At the back of the hills which overlook the town and river were crowds of worshippers among the fine cypress groves, and long processions of peasants arranged in pairs, the men in front, the women behind, each carrying lighted candles or joss-sticks, and accompanied by priests and others who make their harvest on such

occasions. The women were mostly old, some so old that they had to be supported on both sides. It was painful to see such numbers of women trudging along on such roads with their poor stumps of feet. How they can walk at all is a mystery ; many suffer much pain all their lives in consequence of foot-binding.

The women of China are not lovely to the eye, rarely is one even passably plain. Their modesty or rather mock-modesty is distressingly overdone, and their voices (unmelodious as a rule) are most unpleasant when they vituperate, as they not seldom do. Occasionally one hears a sweet voice among girls.

For some distance the road was lined on both sides with beggars, and such a spectacle of dirt, disease, degradation, and deformity I never beheld before. They, like the worshippers, had come from all quarters within a radius of 100 or 150 miles for the month that the pilgrimage would last. Some lay almost naked on wet ground, grovelling in all sorts of abject postures ; the clothing of some consisted of mere strips of coarse matting ; others were a mass of filthy tatters with bodies and hair all begrimed. There were men, and women too, who knocked their faces on the ground to every passer-by, with the result that their noses were driven flat. One young boy, bent in a fixed posture, had his mother strapped on his back, her grey hair floating loose to attract attention. Not a few had their arms and legs so distorted that it was not easy to tell which was which, their legs curling over their shoulders and their arms used as supports for the trunk. Others exhibited limbs wholly or in part

one mass of festering sore and putrid blood and matter, the effect sometimes heightened with red and white paint; one, most horrid of all, had his whole face in such a state that it seemed as if it would be a mercy to put an end to a being who shewed no trace of humanity. It was a half-mile avenue of horrors, mostly produced or maintained artificially, and I was glad to escape even into the squalid, filthy outskirts of the average Chinese town.

When spending a night in Sui-ning in early January, on our way from Ho-chau to Tung-chwan, we had an unexpected visit from the solitary missionary there, Mr. Curnow of the American Episcopal Methodist Union. He had very kindly asked us to stay with him should we be in the town again, and I was only too glad now to avail myself of his invitation; so I went straight to his house, and both he and his good wife at once made me comfortable, setting me down to a capital breakfast. I took the opportunity of obtaining information as to roads, for I was anxious to find some easy way through this tangle of hills in the great red sandstone basins of Szechwan.

One of their converts who went peddling through the country was able to give some very useful hints, and I settled to abandon the usual route to Cheng-tu viâ Kien-chau and after going north some 50 li, strike west along the valley of an affluent of the Fau-kiang, which I was assured was a comparatively easy route, though at the finish it brought me face to face with the barrier range which guards the east side of the Cheng-tu plain.

In the morning of March 9, Mr. Curnow accom-

panied me for 20 li across the strip of rich plain I had passed over in January. Masses of yellow rape now in full flower, a good deal "laid" by the rain, stood six feet high, and the air was heavy with their perfume and with that of the purple-flowered broad beans. The winter wheat stood three feet high, and the opium poppy was growing fast. The absence of paddy-fields, the greater breadth of form and colour, and the appearance of the rich levels were a pleasant change.

We parted at a ferry which took us over a small arm of the river and each went his lonely way.

Briskly trotting over the levels and flats we reached Kui-hua-yuan, a town on the right bank of the river, 50 li from Sui-ning, at 12.40. We passed on the way bands of pilgrims, and saw, on arriving, whole loads of them being packed off in boats, which carried also great stores of large red candles. Just below the town a small fleet of one-man craft were fishing with cormorants.

After tiffin we left the river and struck west. Crossing the ridge behind the town we dropped down to a placid little affluent, the Ku-lu-pa-ho, which is navigable for 60 li up by quite large boats. We followed its valley and gained the 60 li place, Hsui-tien-tse, rather late. Just towards sunset we had crossed a 300 feet hill to save going round it. This was one of the highest we saw and from its summit I had an interesting view of the sandstone formation. As far as the eye could reach in every direction there was a sea of similar summits of varying height. It would be impossible to give names to hills in this country, their number and their similitude baffle one completely. Yet each of the little cups or

basins between has its few little farmsteads, each with its scanty acres.

The town was full of people, and we had some trouble in getting an inn, huge crowds collecting and hemming us in if we stood in the street but a few minutes.

We breakfasted (March 10) at a little roadside place, Lo-kiao-pa-fang, in a small room on one side of the inner court. Before the door was a screen, which hid the head and body but not the feet. One of the ladies of the inn-household stood there for some time, and watched operations through the reed screen, her cow-like feet being visible below. Then came a young man, who stood in the doorway and looked over the screen. When I looked at him, he turned sideways and occasionally gave a furtive glance. Two others appeared, but none of them could face my gaze. No Chinaman can look you in the eyes. If you look straight at them, the uncomfortable, guilty expression that comes over their faces is very remarkable.

Much cotton is grown in these parts and after the crop is gathered the farmers uproot the plants, tie them in little bundles and " lay them in " in the ooze of the fallow paddy-fields, the roots only sticking up above the water. This allows the leaves and twigs to rot off in the ground and restore something to it. They were now removing these bundles from the ooze, and putting them on the bank to dry, to be made up later in still larger bundles and sold for fuel ; nothing is wasted.

Irrigation was commencing, and numerous water-wheels were being got into place. For a low lift a sort of chain pump is employed, forcing a good

volume of water up a wooden conduit which the square pieces of wood all but fit. It is practically a chain of jointed wooden pieces worked over sprocket wheels, like a bicycle, the larger wheel being generally driven by the feet of four men. A lift of different construction consists of a large lightly-built bamboo wheel, about 18 feet diameter, with small tubes of bamboo fastened to the periphery, which discharge sideways into a trough at the higher elevation. The wheel is set at an angle to facilitate delivery. On the inside of the rim, laths about six inches wide are secured, and on these a man is always walking upwards at the bottom of the wheel, a sort of squirrel in the cage arrangement, ingenious, but requiring hard work. Other wheels 40 to 60 feet diameter, constructed on the same principle, are driven by the rivers themselves, wherever there is sufficient current or a slight fall to give a lead.

We went up a small river-valley for most of the day, making short cuts over steep shoulders. The road was unusually good for a country one, being quite as large as the main road from Chung-king and about as ill kept. At midday we stopped at Peng-tse-tien, and got in to Tai-ping-kiao, a small market town, during daylight, the distance for the day being 90 li. At the inn I retired at once to my dog-kennel of a room, but was so beset by crowds who made holes in the partition and glared at me, that I sent for the head-man of the place, an apothecary, showed him my passport, and made my complaint. He was civil and apologetic, went away and had the place cleared.

At 10 p.m. the thermometer showed the temper-

ature at 58°, a comfortable warmth elsewhere, but here, though I wore my warmest winter clothing, I felt cold.

When I turned in to sleep, the noise usual at these inns increased; there were batterings more and more violent at the outer door, then yells and screeches, and the persistent din of scores of voices all bellowing at the same time. When I got up to inquire into the cause, I found the boy outside my room door in a state of great excitement and all the battle lanterns lit, so to speak. Mr. Hsia came in much perturbation, and said that there were hundreds of people, armed with spears and swords, shouting "to kill the foreigner," and that he and the soldiers were arguing with them. I bade him go to the elders of the village and say that they had better make the people disperse, otherwise it would be worse for them. He told this to some who were standing by, and they seemed to take it kindly.

The people had wanted to know who this proud foreigner was, who ordered the head-man to turn them out. I turned in again and, as the row began to subside, soon fell fast asleep.

At three o'clock I was awakened by a loud conversation going on in Hsia's room, due to the arrival of the superior head-man of the town, who had been sent for post-haste from a place ten miles off. He made apologies, gave orders, and left.

I had no sooner got well asleep again than it was dawn, and the village temple gongs and drums were beaten, and I had to get up. When I went out, the head-man was waiting with his satellites and proceeded to enwrap me in a long strip of red cloth,

while crackers were let off, and everything was emblematic of the buried hatchet.

As we went along I got some further details out of Mr. Hsia, but how far they represent the truth I know not. His story was that, there being no stable, the ponies were tied up in front of the inn and the saddle-cloths left on them. About nine o'clock one of the cloths was found to have been removed and, on getting no redress, the two soldiers, the boy, and the cook went of their own accord and made a disturbance at the head-man's door. The head-man, becoming angry, ordered them to be seized and bound, and then all the people of the place entering into the excitement armed themselves and turned out to protect their head-man, and so the fun went on. No doubt, being excited, they turned their attention to my humble self and said unkind things.

The whole day we had beautiful summer weather and our way was fairly easy, as the road largely followed a small drainage system. Early in the day we crossed the divide and found the water flowing west again. At 50 li from the start we struck a broad shallow river flowing south-west, which, as far as I could make out, runs into the To-kiang at Kien or thereabouts. Just before sundown from the crest of a ridge we saw, some 18 to 20 miles off rising out of the lower ground and barring our path, the long range running north and south, which next day we should have to cross. Our stopping places during the day (exclusive of Hung-tien-ya, a market-town, where rest was impracticable for the crowds of gazers) were San-chiao-kau, 32 li from

the start ; Chu-ko-si, 28 li ; and Ko-pa-chiao, 30 li, all the li being long.

On March 12, ten miles of easy going on a road a few feet up from the river brought us out into the Cheng-tu plain. For a wonder the hills were not cultivated, and the warm red of the sandstone showed through the coarse grass. High up on the hill-sides were many stone quarries, and the slopes to the river were so smooth and regular that slides had been made on which to let the dressed-stone slabs down to the river bank. Here and there on the lower slopes were patches of cultivation, with little thatched cottages set in orange trees, and occasional rest-houses.

At many of the cottage doors was set up on end a flat-sided stone pillar, with the top carved into the head of a sort of scowling, grinning devil, of which, as I was given to understand, the geomantic effect was remarkably fine.

Carry coolies often hire a substitute for part of the day ; sub-let their contracts, in fact. In the midday heat, one of mine was about to close with a man to carry his load for 50 cash, when the latter saw that the coolie was with me and had to get on to an evening resting-place, so raised his figure to 120 cash and lost the job. No one is more disposed than the Chinese to take every advantage of another's misfortune, or of his having no time to spare.

After leaving the pass we had a long hot tramp over a narrow by-road through very undulating country to Yia-chia-tu, a village of the plain, where the accommodation seemed quite luxurious after the wretched inns of the previous week.

Our day's distances were 20 li to Y-chau ; 30 li to

San-wang-miao, and 40 long li to Yia-chia-tu. At 9 p.m., the temperature was at 62°, yet I had to put on thicker clothing to keep me warm.

Next morning (March 13) we breakfasted at Hsin-tien-tse (30 li), and, after a three hours' journey arrived at Cheng-tu (50 li) at 1.30. Going to the China Inland Mission, I found that the house was occupied by Mr. Torrance and two of the Tibetan band from Sung-pan, which station the China Inland Mission had turned over to the Church Missionary Society. I was asked to stop and share their bachelor quarters, and for nearly seven weeks I enjoyed their hospitality.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHENG-TU.

DURING these weeks I saw much of the working of the various Protestant Missions in Cheng-tu. Their members numbered, in all, 26, of whom 16 were ladies, and they shewed wonderful devotedness in labouring among an unappreciative people. They lived harmoniously in their several settlements, and the different societies worked for the advancement of their common purposes without jealousy. They had, in fact, divided the country into districts, so that there might be no interference one with another, and they had periodical religious and social gatherings. The missions were conducted by capable men who having travelled far were able to give me much information as to these western provinces and their inhabitants. The scientific knowledge among them, and the opportunities of observation which they possessed might, it seemed to me, receive more ample acknowledgment. From Mr. Peat I received results of several observations for latitude which he had taken in Szechwan. Such observations might perhaps without injury be considerably extended, and, if instruments for meteorological work were supplied, records might

be kept which would be exceedingly useful to the world at large.

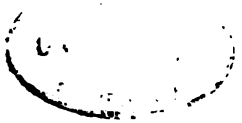
Szechwan weather I found during this visit to be subject to wide variation. On March 14 it was sultry, with a hot wind blowing; on the 15th towards sunset there was a tornado, after which the temperature suddenly fell about 20°; on the 17th the five days' brightness gave place to grey gloom with a damp atmosphere which gave one a feeling of chill, though the thermometer shewed a temperature of 50°; and on the 25th we had heavy rain.

On March 16, I went with Mr. Moyes to the great annual fair which is held on the grounds of a large temple two miles from the south gate. At this fair anything and everything is sold. One part of the ground was devoted to sellers of ornamental trees and flowering plants, among which I saw many large magnolias, azaleas, camellias, orchids, solanum, shrub and pot roses, pinks and even ten-week stocks. Another part was devoted to birds, mostly songsters; a large blackbird was one of the commonest; there were many blue jays, thrushes, larks, canaries, and a number of birds strange to me. Partridges also, and one of the great white-collared, bronze-green and blue-backed pheasants, which seemed very unhappy in a small cage without his three-foot tail.

Wood workers had their assigned part, and it was interesting to note some of the innumerable uses of the wonderful bamboo, which in this country enters into the composition of almost everything.

The interior of one temple and its courts were wholly given up to scroll paintings, mostly modern, very illustrative of the decadent stage of Chinese

IN FRONT OF CITY TEMPLE, CHENG-TU.



art. They represented impossible monsters, more grotesque than hideous or awe-inspiring; warriors and sages whose passions and sentiments were suggested by mere distortion; simpering maidens of expressionless type; tigers, horses, and other beasts portrayed without any attempt at naturalistic effect; landscapes which were distinguished chiefly by absence of perspective. Yet through all, the connection with Japanese art was obvious, and one could see the same evidence of the power of "line" work, which should be great with a people accustomed to write with a brush instead of a pen, and with a free, unsupported wrist. There was, however, no beauty of form or colour, no correctness of drawing, no study of nature, no breadth, no perspective, no atmosphere, nor could anything favourable be said even from the point of view of conventional decorative art.

On March 18, I found one of my ankles painfully swollen and tender, owing, as I supposed, to the action of insects inhabiting a straw palliasse on which I had slept a week before; next day it was puffy and inflamed, and on the day following, the swelling extended above the knee. Bethinking me of the dog-bite, I consulted Dr. Ewan, who told me that I was suffering from "ecchymosis," and would have to lay up for a few days.

Adjoining my quarters was a Chinese house where two young men were preparing for the great examination. They spent a good part of the early morning and late evening in learning by heart the Confucian classics, reciting them in a high-pitched gabble, which is their way of committing them to memory. Carried on till near midnight, this was

neither agreeable to listen to, nor conducive to sleep on the part of the hapless auditor.

In these days I received welcome visits from Americans, from fellow-countrymen, and from Chinese friends. Mr. S——, who was about to return to Chicago to beat up public interest in his work, lamented to me, as others had done, the unwillingness of their supporters at home to hear the whole truth. He was in favour of starting a mission among the Lolos, a simple, manly race, though regarded by the Chinese as "savages." The men wear cloaks of felted wool; the women, bright red and dark blue and green striped skirts, and headgear something like a Basque cap but much larger, made of cotton, and tied on. Men and women are often good-looking, and the women go about freely with the men. Drunkenness, attended by quarrelsomeness, seems the besetting vice of the Lolos. Their language seems connected with that of the Mantze and Sigan tribes. The written language is primitive, and obviously based on conventional renderings of natural objects. Probably they are allied to the Miao-tze of Kwei-chau and to the Karens of the Shan states of Upper Burma.

Mr. Kerr, in his visits, confirmed my opinion that many of the basins in this red sandstone formation are "blind." He told me that the French had begun railway construction in Yunnan, had met with opposition, and were "riding the high horse."

Captain Watts-Jones, who had come through Hunan, spoke well of the Hunanese, whom he had found well-disposed, well-to-do, intelligent, honest and purposeful. The extremely anti-foreign

feeling in that Province seemed to be disappearing.

I had a long visit from Mr. Tong-sing-kow, son-in-law of the elder Mr. Chu and a relative of the well-known Mr. Tong-sing-kong, whom I had met many years before in North China, one of the really enlightened Chinese. We discussed affairs, and he told me that Viceroy Kuei was the trouble; so timid that he dared do nothing for fear, on the

WAITING FOR THE FERRY, EAST GATE, CHENG-TU.

one hand, of offending Peking authorities, on the other of arousing opposition and ill-feeling among the people of the Province.

Another day Mr. Tong and Mr. Chu called together, and we talked over an hour on the railway question. They seemed very friendly and well-disposed, but it is hard to know at any time what Chinese are driving at.

On March 30, a good deal of rain fell and, though the temperature was at 60°, the air was so raw and

damp that I could not quite get rid of chilblains. The trees were springing into leaf, and growth was rapid in all vegetation, there being no checking frosts and the temperature at night much the same as by day. Peach trees were in flower and looked very beautiful, the blossoms being large and profuse. There were pure white and bright red as well as scarlet varieties, some double, which were extremely handsome and seemed to be used ornamentally.

Next day I went out to do a little photography, in company with Mr. Torrance, who on the way back told me of some of the curious notions and customs of the Chinese. They believe that a man's spirit on leaving the body comes under the charge of the retributory demon of justice, but two or three days after death is allowed to revisit his home for a short space, but always in charge of a demon. The family on the expected day clear the guest-hall and retire to other rooms, but in the guest-chamber they leave an egg in a narrow jar on a table with a pair of chopsticks beside it. This is supposed to attract the demon, who spends much time in endeavouring with the indifferent aid of the chopsticks to extract the egg from the narrow-necked jar, and thus gives the man's spirit a longer stay in his old home. It is an instance of the childishness the Chinese shew in many things, but it is curious that they should attribute to the demon inability to get the egg out of the jar by simple means.

When a man is supposed to be possessed of an evil spirit, a sorcerer is called in who exorcises it, chases it into a corner of the room, and gets it into a bottle, over which he pastes a piece of paper.

ENTRANCE TO CITY TEMPLE, CHENG-TU.

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At the sorcerer's place are rows of bottles on shelves, each bottle containing an imprisoned demon.

The number of shops in this and other cities devoted to the sale of paper cash, gold and silver "dings," figures of men-servants, horses, houses, chairs, all of paper and cardboard, which are burned at graves in order to provide the dead with real

PAVILION AT THUNDER GOD TEMPLE, CHENG-TU.

equivalents, is considerable. One day I observed a house of paper, five feet high, and servants of paper of the same height, on their way to be burned at a grave. Letters are also written and burned which are then supposed to reach the deceased. The connection between the use of fire and the spirit world is in itself curious.

One morning I went to the big temple near the

parade ground, and photographed some monstrous demons. Ranged in long arcades behind wooden bars were many figures in colour representing scenes in the Buddhist hell—men being sawn in two, or ground between mill-stones, plunged head foremost into boiling oil, stabbed, pierced, beaten, suspended by the neck in cages, and other tortures such as the Chinese practise.

We walked one afternoon to the East Gate, a veritable beggars' land, their gaunt, tanned, naked bodies lying about on the road or beside it in the most promiscuous way. In East Street we saw part of an immense procession in honour of some idol, with an extraordinary variety of fantastic costume and barbaric display, weapons, implements and symbols, rags and finery; half-naked filthy beggars carrying great scarlet umbrellas with costly devices, dirty boys decorated with feathers and queer caps beating cymbals, gongs and wooden drums, musicians with horns and other instruments, men, dressed to represent ancient warriors and sages, walking with bombastic strides or mincing steps. Many had their faces painted to represent evil spirits, and very evil they looked. Young men, naked to the waist, had small tin candlesticks containing joss-sticks or tapers pinned on to their flesh, but they looked very unconcerned. On hand-barrows and tiny carts on wheels were iron pans containing cypress sprigs and leaves which smouldered, emitting a pungent smoke.

A pleasant afternoon was spent at Tsao-tang-shi (grave hall), a monastery, two miles south-west of the city. It stood among fine bamboos and cypresses, and consisted of several courtyards, large and

A POPPY FIELD AND TEMPLE BEHIND.

small, with ranged buildings and connections with other courts covering a large area. It contained paths over-arched with bamboos, small canals and ponds full of turtles and great carp, summer-houses, bridges, retreats, etc.; quite the place for a picnic, in fact, and so used by the Chinese. Beautiful shrubs and flowering trees adorned the courtyards, and great clumps of pink-red peonies

WALL PICTURE AT THE MONASTERY.

were flowering in central beds; among the ornamental trees was the curious magnolia which shoots straight up and throws its flowers out almost from the wood. At the back of the main building, after passing through a couple of small but pretty courts, we reached a charming retreat, a large, fine, lofty, well-proportioned room, giving on a pleasaunce of beautifully kept and probably very old trees in pots, all curled and gnarled and twisted and barbecued in the most approved fashion, with some

very fine specimens of the adiantum or maidenhair-leaved tree among them. Visible through their foliage was the long white wall, with tiled roof-cap, on the central space of which were great picturesquely writ black characters, probably some apposite saying of some Chinese philosopher.

In an outbuilding of the temple were stowed away 30 taels'-worth (about £4 13s.) of houses, servants, horses, chairs, etc., all made of paper, representing a wealthy Chinese household. These had been sent to be burned on an appropriate day in order to provide the deceased mother of a Taotai with a proper establishment in the other world.

All the arrangements for our picnic were of deep interest to the monks, who, for the most part, were young men. On their shaven crowns, each bore three rows of three round marks, which signified, we were told, that they had passed their novitiate.

Very good-natured they were to the children, who, unmolested and petted, played about in this choice garden. The Chinese show kindly interest in foreign children and do not deride them as they deride foreign adults.

The military exercises of the Chinese seemed fitted rather for amusement and spectacular display than for any serious purpose. On the parade ground in the north-east angle of the wall was a short firing-range, where men fired with obsolete guns at a target about three feet six inches high, and 18 inches wide, at a distance of 80 yards. Most of the marksmen sat on their heels, placed an elbow on each knee, shut their eyes, and let go. Of course they rarely hit the target. There was no one in charge at the target end, and hits were not marked.

MONKS IN A TEMPLE NEAR CHENG-TU.

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A crowd of boys and youths hung round the butt and rushed between the shots to dig the bullet out of the sandy ground. There was no order or control anywhere.

Sometimes the men were drilled in squads in European fashion but by Chinese instructors, with Chinese modifications, and with the inevitable

CHENG-TU BARRACKS AND PARADE GROUND.

display of many banners. Those so drilled were of a different type from the Szechwanese—Hunanese I fancy—broad, thick-set, muscular and of good stature, very good material, and the way in which they did their work shewed that, in competent hands, they would become steady and smart. The officers wore long gowns and large flapping straw-hats at least 30 inches in length.

At other times the drill was on the Chinese

principle. One morning I went to see the "Royal" troops, or Manchu Bannermen, paraded and, though the occasion was not an important one, the scene presented was very striking, as a spectacle.

At one end of the ground near the wall was a small temple, the front of which formed a sort of pavilion where the higher officers took up their posts, the senior, a Colonel, seated at a table in the centre. A little in front and to one side was a kind of fort, in which were the musicians, their instruments being drums and long, wailing trumpets.

The troops in their respective companies stretched in long lines at right angles to the pavilion on each side. They consisted of cavalry, jingal-men (each gun, about seven feet long, being carried on the shoulders of two men), companies with percussion-cap muskets, bodies of spearmen with 20-foot weapons, and "braves" with modern swords and large round shields painted to represent tiger heads. At a little distance was a line of flags across the middle, and behind these a big drum on the ground, which was used to give signals and mark time for the various movements.

The men were not remarkable for their appearance or for uniformity of clothing, nor for precision of movement, though there was some degree of intricacy. After an hour the head of a column of regulars who wore white surcoats marked with large red characters, and who were armed with modern bolt-action rifles, was seen debouching from the road on the left, halting as they got on to the parade ground. Then the trumpets sounded their long-drawn wail, the bugles of the column struck up, the men marched down the road to a position in

rear of the main force, and, having been dismissed, came on to the ground as spectators. An imposing display was then commenced by a minor officer,

EUROPEAN DRILLED HUNANESE.

who, followed by four or five others in line, all with banners, marched down the middle of the parade from the pavilion and took up a position near the

JINGAL-MEN.

drum. The cavalry, followed by the infantry of both columns, then marched towards the pavilion; but wheeled inwards as the heads of columns approached the band-stand, and, crossing to oppo-

site sides retired at the double to the end of the parade ground, where they formed a massive column of companies, jingal-men in front.

The movement was up the sides, across the middle and down to the bottom.

Then came the attack. A line of matchlock men at the head of the column, took a few steps to the front; one man supported the piece, the man in the rear primed it, adjusted his fuse, took aim and fired. After that the musketeers fired volleys; the spearmen ran forward and formed a two-deep line in front; at a signal, they dropped their spears to the horizontal and hopped and danced forward and backward with wild yells and screeches, thrusting vigorously all the time. Again the jingal-men volleyed; then there was firing by the musketeers in loose ranks 12 deep, the front men delivering their fire and dropping back to reload, while those from behind took their places, a confused mob of excited men, taking no aim but only making a noise

After more spear exercise the sword and shield men came to the front and pirouetted, turned somersaults, howled and brandished their swords and shields, the massy column all the while advancing to or retiring from the pavilion, and going through the same sort of pantomine.

Mysterious long packages were next produced and laid down in the form of a square, and on the sound of a horn there arose with great celerity the canvas semblance of a small walled city with battlements and watch-tower; inside, tall standards waved; outside, some of the troops remained on guard, while the main body retired within, followed imme-

GENERAL ADVANCE OF TROOPS AGAINST ENEMY.

CANVAS REPRESENTATION OF WALLED TOWN USED AT CHINESE DRILL.

diately by the cavalry. Suddenly from opposite corners of the ground a few horsemen, representing the enemy, galloped madly towards the city. Thereupon the gates were opened; the cavalry poured forth and gave chase; the musketeers appeared and opened fire, and the end was the disastrous repulse of the foe. Guards were then set, while picked men came forward immediately in front of the pavilion, and in twos and fours entered into mimic combat with spears, javelins, tridents, swords, etc., displaying great activity in a somewhat mechanical system of defence and attack. The forced theatrical attitudes of warriors in action portrayed in Chinese pictures are evidently taken from such representations of warfare.

At the end of the performance, the canvas city was "struck" with the same theatrical effect as that with which it had been reared. A great emblazonment of characters was at once displayed on the spot, there was confusion of excited warriors, and an indiscriminate *feu de joie*.

We were treated with much politeness as spectators and also as visitors when we paid a return visit to the officers' pavilion.

A fortnight later we went to see a review, for which extensive preparations had been made. A raised stand had been erected for us close to the fort-looking structure occupied by the band, and we had an excellent view of the proceedings. The building occupied by the band was between us and the pavilion, which was packed with all the officials in Cheng-tu, the Viceroy himself being present. The number of men paraded was said to be about 5,000, but it did not look so great.

The Hunanese battalions were present, but took no part in the evolutions, which were entirely of the native kind and exactly as I have already described them. The banners were new and the troops gay in new and fanciful uniforms of various kinds. The scene was picturesque enough with its flutter of flags and colour-effects, which were in pleasing contrast to the all-pervading blue garments of the common Chinese with whom the parade-ground and the adjacent city-wall, with its great

COMBAT OF PICKED MEN.

sloping grass-clad inner surface, were packed. All through the morning our stand, which was full of people from the different missions, was more a centre of attraction than the show itself; a great mass of folk with upturned vacuous faces stood and stared at us for hours.

On the following day the review was continued, and archers, both horse and foot, besides match-lock-men and jingallers, displayed their dexterity. When I arrived, the mounted men were at their exercise, riding full-gallop along the wide trench which ran to the side of the pavilion. As they

passed the target, almost touching it, they discharged a pointless shaft from a full-stretched powerful bow, but the display was rather one of horsemanship than of skill in shooting.

Then came the footmen's turn. These wore the official hat or cap with red tassel, and long, rather close-fitting gowns, beautifully embroidered, and the clumsy-looking mandarin boots. Each carried on his back a sheaf of cloth-yard arrows, heavily feathered, with longish lancet points. The target, about eight feet high, was white with three red balls of matting; the range was about 40 to 45 yards, and the practice was not remarkable, though most of the arrows hit somewhere. The archer took his stand on a red mat in front of the pavilion, facing it, drew an arrow in a peculiar and prescribed manner, fitted it carefully to the string, then swinging his body to a half turn, took aim, let fly, turned to the pavilion again, came to "attention," made a marked pause, and repeated these movements till he had discharged his shafts; then he knelt for a second on one knee and, after rising and giving his bow to an attendant, walked slowly up to the pavilion where he received a large badge of silver beaten out thin.

After a time the matchlock-men commenced firing a little lower down at similar targets. Their quaint uniforms of blue and white and yellow, were very handsome and becoming, somewhat resembling our foot soldiers of the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

Formed in file they discharged their antique matchlocks one after another at about 50 yards from the target, adjusting the awkward-looking

CAPTAIN WONG AND FAMILY.

OF THE
UNIVERSITY
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curved stock to the shoulder and bending forward through a great angle as they took aim. Yards of match were looped to the side of the gun, and this they carefully blew up and fastened to the hammer as they came to the front. As the hammer fell, there was a distinct puff from the powder in the priming-pan before the smoke and flame emerged from the muzzle; not unfrequently there was a miss-fire. Usually they seemed to hit the target, as they might easily do, considering its size and proximity. With training they would probably make fair shots with a modern rifle.

A favourable specimen of the individual soldier was Captain Wong, on whom I called, with Mr. Peat. He was a tall, fine-looking Northerner, one of the Szechwanese troops we had seen reviewed. The military mandarins are less frigid and formal than the civil, and he shewed himself affable and friendly. I photographed him and his whole family in a group, arrayed in their best garb, in the stolid and formal Chinese fashion. He gave us "cookies" which were good and tea which was refreshing, and he paid our chair-bearers, which, I learned, was the polite thing to do, though not what the visitors liked.

CHAPTER XX.

CHENG-TU—CONCLUSION.

In the afternoon of April 4, I rode to the China Inland Mission at Kau-fu-ngai and made Mr. and Mrs. Vale's acquaintance. Mr. Vale—a pleasant and very capable man, who was considered the best Chinese scholar in the Province and had had experience of official intercourse—very kindly offered to act as my interpreter, and I applied through the Foreign Bureau for an interview with the Viceroy within a week.

Next morning, Mr. Li, head of the Bureau, came to tell me that the Viceroy would be pleased to see me *if* my business had any other end than that of railways; on that subject it was useless to see him, as his mind was made up; he was promoting mining enterprise by foreigners, and until he saw how the people took it he would not move in the railway matter.

All of this, and much more, I took to mean that the great man did not want to be bothered, and that Mr. Li's interests did not lie our way.

I replied that I had come a long distance and would have to give an account of myself on my

return, and that I required an official answer to my proposal; to which he answered that I might take the Viceroy's message through him as "*une réponse officielle.*" I said that I had not made an official proposal yet, that I wished to discuss the matter with the Viceroy, and that I must have my answer direct from the Viceroy's own lips. He did his best to convince me of my error, while I did my best to convince him of his, and, at last, perceiving that I was not to be moved, he asked what day would suit and went off to arrange things. An hour later he returned with a message that the Viceroy would see me at 10 a.m. on Saturday, but not with a missionary interpreter.

With a Chinese interpreter all discussion would be stifled, and I would not know what was really said to or by the Viceroy. But Mr. Li insisted that it was not etiquette "*pour les missionaires de se mêler dans les affaires commerciales.*" I hinted that there was no need for them to do so, that a missionary would only be spokesman, and that there were many precedents even in this Province.

He continued to urge that I should use the Viceroy's English interpreter, who knew only a few phrases; or my own, who was quite unequal to the duty, or some Chinese in the missions who knew English, but there was only one and he knew but little; or that the missionaries should coach a Chinese, but then of course the man so coached would make my demand, the Viceroy would make his answer "*un refus tout net,*" and there would be an end of the matter. In fine, he wriggled his utmost.

On the afternoon of April 6, a letter came from

Mr. Li, couched in very abrupt terms, setting forth that the French Consul had made application for railway concessions, as also had Mr. Little, that both had been refused; that it was therefore useless for me to see the Viceroy, and my appointment with him was considered cancelled. To add to the insult, the envelope was addressed to me with the honorific "Sien-seng," which means "teacher," and is not used for anyone in my position.

Of course the reason for this was my insistence on bringing with me as interpreter a man who *would* interpret, straight talk being what they feared.

I answered expressing my surprise that the appointment which had been made should be so cancelled, and stating that what had been done in the case of others did not concern me; that I had that to say to the Viceroy which I must say myself, and which I thought would have his favourable consideration; that I proposed therefore to call the next morning as arranged; finally, I added a few words drawing attention to the fact that the proper honorifics had not been used, presumably by mistake, in addressing me. I then made preparations for my visit, borrowing from a Chinese Taotai his green chair, which is used by all officials from the rank of Taotai upwards, yellow chairs being used by the Imperial family only, and blue chairs for rank below that of Taotai.

Mr. Vale was to have a blue chair, as it is not correct for an interpreter to use anything else—and his was to have three coolies, while mine was to be borne by four.

As I was starting next morning for the China Inland Mission, where I was to meet Mr. Vale and

where I had ordered the chairs to be ready at 9 a.m. for our visit to the Viceroy, the Director of the Anglo-Chinese college, who also acted as one of the Viceroy's very inefficient interpreters, was sent to inform me that my letter to Mr. Li of the Foreign Office had only been received by him late the previous evening, that it had only been translated that morning, and therefore there had been no time to make fresh arrangements. Of course it was all pretext, but I had to decide on the spur of the moment whether I would run the risk of being refused admittance at the gate. I decided not to go, and heard afterwards that I had done right. I told the gentleman that I was acting on the advice of Chinese of importance in Peking and on that of my own Government; that I had come 12,000 miles and had been four months in the Province; that I must see the Viceroy, and that I would stay till I did. He had much to say in favour of my seeing the Foreign Office men and discussing affairs with them; but I declined his suggestion, and so the conversation ended.

Late in the evening I had two letters, one from the Foreign Office, and the other from Mr. Li (which had come earlier while I was out). The former was again addressed "Sien-seng," so I promptly returned it by the messenger who had brought it, saying there was no "Bai Sien-seng" here. Mr. Li's was addressed "Da-lao-yei," which is the rank given to a "hsien" or magistrate below a Taotai; that also I returned by one of my soldiers.

About 10 o'clock the Foreign Office letter came back correctly addressed, "Bai-da-ren." It was from a personage new on the scene, one Wu Taotai,

and briefly intimated that at any time he would be willing to see me at the Foreign Office and discuss my business.

So it was a regular battle now, and a very unfortunate one, as to who should give in. If I did, of course I should be listened to politely and then told there was nothing to be done. If I persevered, I would not gain the Viceroy's good-will by forcing his hand.

About midday of the 8th, the letter returned to Mr. Li came back, this time addressed to "Birch Esq.," a rather neat way of getting out of the difficulty and "saving his face"—that most important of all things to a Chinaman. It was simply to inform me that he would be pleased to meet me at any time to discuss affairs—not a word about the Viceroy. I decided not to answer till next morning and then to write to him and to Wu Taotai, expressing my surprise that my appointment with the Viceroy had been broken, and, while thanking them for their offer to see me, saying that I should have pleasure in availing myself of it, if necessary, after I had seen his Excellency.

On the afternoon of the 10th, I met Mr. ——, who, being well posted in what had been going on with the Viceroy, gave me some useful hints. The chief obstacle, he said, was undoubtedly the timidity of the Viceroy, who was resolute not to grant any railway rights now, but feared his resolution might give way if exposed to the pressure of an interview. Moreover the French sympathies of some about him fostered his efforts to keep me at bay; and that was the worse danger perhaps.

A letter came for me from Wu Taotai, reiterat-

ing his offer to meet me at the Foreign Office and naming a time as convenient for doing so. After talking matters over with Mr. Vale, I replied to the effect that if the Viceroy did not at the moment wish to grant railway rights I would not press him, but that part of my mission here was to inform him on matters of importance, with which he should be made acquainted; otherwise, if certain high Chinese interests suffered, it would be no fault of mine or of those who stood behind me. Finally, I again formally requested an interview and an early answer to my application for it.

At mid-day of the 11th, the Director of the Anglo-Chinese School visited me. My letter had been handed to him to translate, and he had difficulty with some of the expressions—"interests would suffer," for one; with *bank* interest he was familiar. Perhaps also his visit was a fishing one, for he dwelt not a little on the words "high Chinese interests," but he took little from me if that was the case.

Another reply from the Taotai reached me next afternoon. He desired me to go to the Foreign Office and tell him what I had to say to the Viceroy, after which I could see the latter if necessary.

To this evasion of the point I answered that what I had to say was for the Viceroy's ear in the first place; that after seeing him, I should be pleased to discuss things with them if so desired; and I requested a categorical reply as to an interview.

Watts-Jones, who also had applied for an audience, was visited by a Foreign Office mandarin the same afternoon and was asked what he wished to see the

Viceroy about. He replied much as I had done, and the following afternoon had an intimation that the great man would see him on Monday. I did not know on what grounds they could refuse me now, as Watts-Jones was going on railway matters, and was taking Vale to interpret for him, these being the two points I had been fighting for.

Late on the 14th, I had my answer, just a wooden repetition of the previous replies, that I must first see the Foreign Office, who would then report to the Viceroy—the same stupid obstruction.

Next day I sent a telegram to British Consul, Chung-king :—

> "Owing to obstruction by Foreign Office here, am unable to see Viceroy, therefore am leaving for Peking."

This was really aimed at the Chinese, as all foreign telegrams are copied and sent to the Foreign Office for the Viceroy's information.

On the 16th at 9.30 a.m., Watts-Jones started for the interview, brilliant in scarlet and gold and accompanied by Mr. Vale as interpreter. The Viceroy gave him a long and agreeable reception, but told him that, if he wanted to talk business, he must go to the Foreign Office thereafter, as he would treat him just as he had treated me, *i.e.*, grant one interview of a formal character and then refer him to the Foreign Office.

But this was not quite the case, for he had made an appointment to see me the second time, and then broken it.

He took the opportunity of saying to Watts-Jones

that he was quite firm as to not granting any railway concessions, but that he would let him know when a change came, which would not be until the Hankau-Peking line was completed.

Watts-Jones was rather easily satisfied—but he hadn't known the Chinese for fifteen years! Now he meant to go to Peking and try to push forward things there.

On the 18th I paid a visit to Mr. ——, to discuss what was to be done, and I found that he approved of my plan. I had made up my mind not to see the Foreign Office, but to write a letter direct to the Viceroy in Chinese, saying that I thanked him for his courteous message; that, as my words had been misrepresented I wished to assure him that I had no ill-feeling; but it was desirable for political reasons, which I could not and would not disclose to the Foreign Office, that I should see him personally; and I again asked for an interview. I said, further, that I had no intention of unduly pressing matters if the time was not ripe, and hinted that if I did not see him I should go to Peking with a grievance, and that matters might take a form less agreeable to his Government.

Mr. —— and I discussed whether the letter should take the form of a "bin," that is, a letter of a particular sort, conveying a request, and thereby putting its author on a lower level. A "bin" is black outside and red and white inside; the request is written on the red paper, and the recipient is supposed to use the white in reply. This method therefore should secure a direct and personal answer. On the other hand it might indicate an admission of inferiority; so I decided to send a

letter written as to an equal. This might possibly offend the great man, but, on the other hand, it seemed more likely to impress him.

In correspondence with Chinese officials it is important to have letters written in good official style, as any deviation from the correct form of language is looked on as offensive, but it is difficult to procure the services of competent men for this purpose.

I went to Shan-si-kai to find a teacher in the mission there who was an official, but he had left. So I returned and took council of Mr. Vale. But, fine scholar as he was, he confessed himself utterly unable to render my letter into official language. Then I sent it to Mr. —— and begged him to put it into Chinese.

Next day he sent me a Chinese translation, suggesting, however, that I should not use it, but write my letter in English in so difficult a hand that the Viceroy's interpreters would not be able to read it, for then it would be sent to him for translation, he being the only Chinese in Cheng-tu fluent in English. In this way the suspicion of collusion would be avoided. In this land everyone suspects, and so keen-witted are people that words spoken in truthful simplicity are perhaps the most baffling of all, for no one can think that the obvious meaning is the one intended.

This was my last shaft, and I began to rejoice at the idea of being on the road again.

The following afternoon, when I happened to be out, Mr. Tsao, a Foreign Office official, called, and, not finding me, saw Mr. Vale. My letter to the Viceroy had proved undecipherable and was brought

back for explanation. This, Mr. Vale declined to give, "no b'long my pidgin," but suggested that the Viceroy should send it to Mr. ——. The official thought otherwise; possibly they suspected ——; possibly they thought my letter threatening and did not want it to be seen of too many.

Anyhow Mr. ——'s plan had failed, and so I set about getting his translation copied to send in.

"Business done," as *Punch* says, "three days wasted."

Late on the afternoon of the 21st my note to the Foreign Office, covering that to the great man, came back to me with a request to explain one or two words in it!

On the Sunday (April 22) I had a talk with Watts-Jones, and found that his satisfaction with the officials was not exactly what it had been. He had submitted to the Viceroy, through the Foreign Office, a scheme for canalising the small river which connects the great salt-well district with the main river, a work much wanted no doubt, and had accompanied it with a working model of a lock and gates. He found the officials much tickled with this, and indeed the Chinese are always perfect babies where a mechanical toy is concerned. It had been shewn to the Viceroy, and he had said that Watts-Jones must be a very clever man, that he approved the idea, and that he would send some one down to the salt district to examine into the possibilities of the matter (*anglicé*—a dismissal of it).

However, Watts-Jones was full of the idea of going down there too, and explaining and so forth; so I gave him some good advice, and told him before doing so to get the Foreign Office to agree in writing

to pay him a substantial fee if they decided to canalise the river, either with or without foreign assistance.

At 7 o'clock, I had a mysterious communication from Mr. ——, asking me to see him that evening in connection with my letter to the Viceroy.

I went to Mr. ——'s house at once, and found that the Viceroy had sent for him that afternoon, apparently to convey to me a message. My letter had frightened the Viceroy ; he did not like to reply to it, was afraid to give me a refusal in writing, didn't want to see me, and didn't like not to see me, lest there might be consequences. The message was to the effect that the Viceroy was greatly occupied ; that he did not want to take up my time by keeping me in Cheng-tu ; why did I not approach him in the regular way through the Foreign Office, so that there might be a record kept of public business ? and so on ; all of which indicated that he would not refuse to see me, if only I would make a formal approach through the Foreign Office.

My reply was that I had nothing to reproach myself with, seeing that I had, in the first place, made my application to the Viceroy through the Foreign Office, who had arranged a meeting and then broken it off—why was it broken off ?

Mr. —— said the reason was that I wanted to have Mr. Vale to interpret, and it was not proper for missionaries to be mixed up in these affairs.

I asked, " Why then did the Viceroy allow Mr. Watts-Jones to bring Mr. Vale with him ? " This was an *impasse*, out of which even Chinese ingenuity could not get. He went on to say that it was a custom in China when one was leaving a place to

announce the fact to the chief man and ask for an interview "*pour prendre congé*"; that, if I would call at the Foreign Office next day and do this, he could undertake that I would have a most amiable reception; that the nature of my business with the Viceroy would not be asked; that though they could not promise me an interview with him, they would endeavour to persuade him to see me, and that no objection would be made to my bringing to an interview anyone I liked to interpret for me.

I informed him that I was not dissatisfied with the position as it stood, as it gave me some strong cards to play at Peking, but, being unwilling to refuse a hand held out, I would give an answer on the next morning.

This was the fourth day from the date of my letter to the Viceroy.

The following morning (April 23) I sent the Foreign Office a notification that I would call in the afternoon, and went to Shan-si-kai to borrow Watts-Jones' chair, which was green, the colour befitting the Taotai rank which I claimed.

Watts-Jones told me that he had gone to the Foreign Office that morning, and had been most affably received by Mr. Wu and Mr. Li. He was told that if his suggestion were adopted he would certainly be employed; but when he asked to have this assurance in writing, he got no satisfaction.

From Mr. —— I received a letter intimating that the Viceroy would see me next day at 3 o'clock. It seemed strange that I should be informed of this through him, and I feared that somehow the matter, after all, would not come to much.

At the appointed time I went in state to the Yamen, accompanied by Mr. Vale.

At the great gate the delay seemed rather long; then the "ting-chai" who had delivered my card came back and motioned to the bearers to enter by the small side-gate used by minor officials and people of low degree. My soldiers hesitated for a moment and asked a question to assure themselves that the "ting-chai" was not mistaken; then they wheeled towards the right, the bearers following. I at once stopped them and motioned towards the centre gates, whereupon the "ting-chai" went back to the inner courtyard, but returned immediately, looking very scared, while a minor Yamen official, also very white and frightened, came and gasped out: "You may come in by the side gate, or you may go away, just as you like."*

So we instantly went away, as it would never have done to put up with such an affront—evidently intentional.

When we had called in January we had been received with every courtesy; why this rudeness to me now, especially following on the holding out of the olive branch? The reason was tolerably apparent; Mr. Li, the representative of French interests, looked on me as dangerous, and to prevent my having access to the Viceroy had prepared this insult. His colleague, Wu, was weak, the Viceroy

* It may be assumed that the conduct of the Viceroy Kuei (a timid man, "sitting on the fence"), who was in communication with Peking, was influenced by the plans then in progress there for the extermination of the foreigner which culminated in the attack on the Legations. The same remark may be applied to the behaviour of and hindrances caused by the escort who accompanied the two travellers from Cheng-tu to Sung-pan and the officials at that place.—ED.

was weaker, and Li, a strong man, swayed them both.

At the review which took place next day I met Mr. ——, who had much to say. The Viceroy had told him that on our first visit we had passed through the side doors, which was not true ; that my status being only that of a merchant, he had treated me accordingly, an obvious evasion, as Europeans are not treated as Chinese.

Mr. —— said that the Viceroy was a Manchu, a fact which accounted for everything, and that he relied on the protection of his powerful nephew at Peking who was said to be at that time the most influential man in China. He affirmed that the slight was the Viceroy's own doing, for there was no accounting for his fits of caprice, and he tried to assure me that Wu and Li were in no way to blame.

The Viceroy had told him that he fully realised that railways would have to come, and that it was better to entrust their creation to Englishmen, but that he himself was not going to be the one to initiate them !

Just as I reached the door on my return, there drew up before me two green chairs containing Taotais Wu and Li, who had come to pay one of those short ceremonial visits which precede and indicate a desire to reopen negotiations. As I was fairly caught, I had to receive them. They stayed a few minutes, uttering a few formalities, asked when I was leaving, said they would send to-morrow a letter to the mandarin at Sung-pan to give me all needful aid, lifted their cups of tea and departed.

According to Mr. Vale this was simply the precursor to another visit, in which they might be

expected to smooth things down—though I could not see how that was possible, and in fact they did not come again.

I telegraphed to the Consul at Chung-king that the Viceroy had, under circumstances of great and unprovoked rudeness, broken his second appointment for an interview. This, not for any effect it would have on the Consul but as a protest, which, being written in plain English, would certainly come before the Viceroy.

I had been considering and discussing with Watts-Jones the route which should be chosen for the remainder of my journey. From the China Inland Mission at Lan-Chau I received information by telegraph that the Yellow River was navigable from April to September, down to Ning-hsia and Tok-to, and I made my plans accordingly. My purpose was to cross the plain to the west to Kwan-hsien, and then strike up among the mountains in beautiful scenery to Sung-pan in the north-west corner of the Province, this being the trade route for the wool and other products which come down from North-East Tibet.

Twelve days would take me to Sung-pan, and then I proposed to get pack animals and strike across the Tibetan grass country due north to Ta-chau. As far as I could make out no foreigner had ever been over this route, for the usual one lies a bit to the east.

The country is uninhabited except by nomads and has the reputation of being dangerous, and there is at all times a good deal of rapine and brigandage in western Kan-su, mostly in the winter months however.

If the Chinese authorities would let us go, we should be provided with a mounted guard, but most likely there would be no trouble, as the natives have a wholesome respect for the foreigner and his weapons. From Ta-chau probably we should skirt the interesting country near Mount Labron, shewn as Chinese on the map, but really Tibetan it would seem, and come out on the Yellow River above the interesting capital town of Lan-chau.

Thence we proposed to go by raft or boat down river to Ning-hsia, and if possible on to Tok-to at the north-east angle of the great bend of the river, and so on to Peking, either by Kalgan or by a more southerly route, following the large affluent which joins the Pei-ho below Peking.

This route would bring me into the remote hinterland of the Tientsin trade, which draws largely on western Kansu even as far as the Kuku-nor. It would round off my journey to Kalgan, where the caravan route from Peking forks, one part going to Siberia via Kiachta and the other westward into Kansu, forming in fact the great wool route which the Germans aim at diverting to Kiau-chau eventually.

I wished particularly after reaching Tok-to to cross the divide to the large town of So-ping on the head waters of the Sang-han-ho, and follow its course by Ta-tung to the point where it joins the Yang-ho just below Ki-ming, and then to follow the combined river to where it debouches into the plain just to the west of Peking. This route would lie within the great wall of China, outside of which we are tied by the action of our Government to leave a clear field to the Russians.

On the 26th the Foreign Office sent me a letter addressed to the mandarin at Sung-pan, requiring him to give me all needful assistance for the journey to Lan-chau in the way of escort through the disturbed country.

On the 28th I paid off Mr. Hsia and the big cook, and gave the former a testimonial in which I said what I could for him, but also that he was given to the Chinese vice of "squeezing," which had prevented his being of the use he might have been. He protested a little, but in a way that indicated rather surprise at his own moderation than at my expectation that he would be quite honest.

The boy was to come with me—he had no English, but knew my habits and had always been very willing and useful.

Watts-Jones's boy, who acted also as cook, had a little English and he (W.-J.) had a little Chinese. His "teacher" and bottle washer, a Hunanese, knew no English.

After a baddish night—hot and restless with a heavy cold—I stayed in all the morning (Sunday) and made preparations

After dinner I went over to the Canadians and bade adieu to Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson, Mr. and Mrs. Hartwell, whose little girl, having suffered from a malarial fever, still lay in a very weak state; Dr. and Mrs. Ewan, who gave me a magic cure for my cold, and Dr. and Mrs. Smith—then to the ladies' house and said good-bye to the five ladies. Soon after tea Mr. Way came to call on me, having just arrived. I had met him coming up the river, a fine, powerful-looking west-countryman. He had had a very cold job on the Poyang lake in December—now

he was going down the Kien-chang valley to look at Mr. Tong's copper mines.

At 10 p.m., Watts-Jones arrived to say that he would be ready to start next mid-day (the 30th).

So this was my last night in the capital of Szechwan. I should not have had a very pleasant seven weeks here had I been stopping at a Chinese inn with no European society; but, as it was, the time had gone not unpleasantly at all. I had been leading a simple, quiet life, seeing a good deal of what mission work and missionary life is, and I certainly parted with regret from all the kind-hearted folk, who had welcomed the stranger so hospitably.

All that is known of the journey from Cheng-tu to Lan-chau is contained in the following extract from a letter written by Mr. Birch at Lan-chau, June 22, 1900, to Mr. Peat of Cheng-tu:—

"Watts-Jones got here on the 18th, having come the direct road from Ta-chau, along the valley of the Ta-ho, while I went round by Ho-chau. It was a most unpleasant journey for both. I had five days of more or less continuous rain, and, the formation being largely the loess, it was mighty bad going.

"We had a most interesting journey across the Tibetan plateau, although the weather was very broken, and we were twice overtaken by snow in the high passes. Fortunately, the sun cleared it off pretty soon, or we should have been in a nasty predicament—unable either to go forward or turn back easily.

"We had no trouble whatever with the Mantse

tribes, though we came through a pretty rough district. Being a fairly large party, and not stopping anywhere for more than a day or two, we did not afford much temptation or time for attack, I suppose, though one day our escort of about twenty-five Chinese troopers were horribly scared. I don't think they would have been of much use had it at any time come to blows.

"We shot all along the route and kept our camp well supplied with game (ducks, geese, pheasants, hares, and pigeons—large game we saw very little of and had no chance at). This use of our weapons no doubt made an impression, for the Mantse, though courageous enough, have a wholesome respect for foreign fire-arms. Our escort gave us more trouble than anything else. The Ba-jung was a miserable wretch—an opium-smoker, very disobliging—and the men took the cue and were disobedient and unruly, as well as incapable. They caused us a good deal of delay and annoyance, and ought to be well punished. The only penalty we could inflict was to deprive them of the handsome gratuity we should otherwise have given. At Sung-pan there was a regular plot—as we found out after we had started—to force us to take yak instead of mules so that we might—after a day or two—join a huge caravan of tea-traders, who would then have had the advantage of our escort and protection. There is no doubt whatever that all the officials at Sung-pan were in the plot—big squeezes having been paid. This we thoroughly defeated, and went away ahead of the caravans, for there were several of them. The result was that instead of mules we were obliged to have yak, lost a week in Sung-pan,

took a month to get here, were thrown into bad weather in the passes, and now have the wet season here—and will have very much more of it and very hot as we go along.

"We have been through magnificent scenery and have crossed over two passes nearly 14,000 feet above sea. The alpine flowers up in these wild mountain ranges were very beautiful—many entirely new to me; there were also many English flowers growing in profusion at high altitudes, such as buttercups, king-cups, cowslips, etc., covered with flowers. The most conspicuous, however, were large tulip-shaped yellow flowers—but larger than tulips —which, with the sun on them, were glorious; also a handsome crimson variety like a field poppy, with hanging head.

"B.'s map is in the main correct, though the courses of his rivers are wrong, and he shows one which does not exist. We struck what must have been the head-waters of the Pai-shui at one high pass, and followed it down some way. Also at the high pass we must have been very close to the head-water of the Ta-tung river. Some exploration to the west would be necessary, and it would be very interesting to discover whether the water flowing north after the high passes went into the Yangtsze or the Yellow river. It turned back on the plateau itself, but which basin it falls into it was not possible to say. The position of Ta-chau on the map is incorrect. It is a good bit more to the N.W. The Yellow river, where I struck it at its confluence with the Ta-kia, is a big river; it was pretty well at its full summer height, and of a rich red colour, laden with sediment. Whatever may be happening

to China politically, there is no doubt that physically all this part, where the ground is deep in 'loess,' is in transformation—and that very rapid. It is a strange, weird-looking country, and rather repellent, but the climate is fine. Just now the temperature is very pleasant—about 60° to 65° in the shade from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. with cool nights. Of course, we are still about 8,000 feet up. From Sung-pan to Ta-chau we were at a sufficiently high altitude to make one's breath come very short. At Ta-chau we were most kindly received and entertained by Mr. Rudd and Mr. Schneider, two young countrymen of yours. We had to wait there three days as it is a small place and mules had to be sent from elsewhere. Here, Mr. Hunter is alone and has kindly taken us in and made us very much at home.

"We go by raft for about six or seven days, and hope to get off to-morrow, but have to change three times before reaching Tok-to. A telegram from Shanghai met us here to say that Pau-ting-fu has been taken by the Boxers, and that Peking district is very unsettled, and we are advised not to attempt to go there, but to go down to Han-Kau. We both think that we ought to be safe anyhow as far as Tok-to, and from there, if we go to Kalgan, we can always—if we find the Chih-li district disturbed—make our way across the border into Mongolia where the people are friendly to Europeans. Once at Kalgan we can act as circumstances may dictate—either going across the mountains to Shan-hai-Kwan on the gulf, or into Siberia by the Russian caravan road if we find that we cannot get on to Peking on account of serious troubles. . . ."

The two travellers could not be persuaded to renounce their intention of proceeding to Peking. At Lan-chau they embarked on a raft to descend the Hwang-ho to Ning-hsia; two days later, on June 24, *the raft was wrecked and Mr. Birch was drowned. Captain Watts-Jones succeeded in clinging to a floating plank and escaped with his life, but, a few weeks later, was barbarously murdered at Kwei-hwa-cheng by the Deputy Prefect.*

THE END.

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